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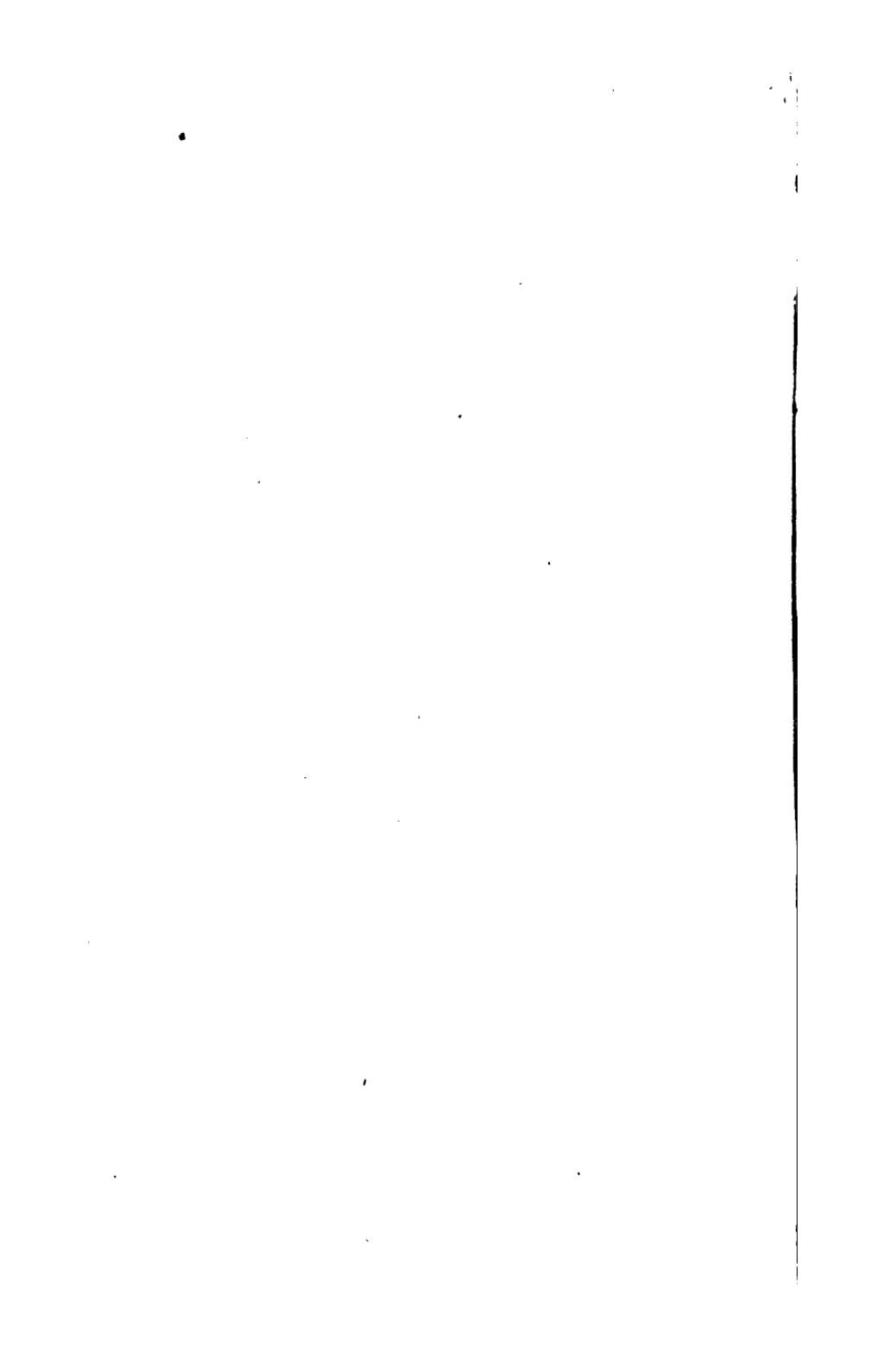
FOR BOOKS ON SCOTLAND AND
SCOTTISH LITERATURE

2. 11. 1911. 1. 3. 1911



THE HOLOCAUST,
LAYS OF PALESTINE,
AND OTHER POEMS.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
ENCHANTMENT DISENCHANTED ;
OR, A TREATISE ON SUPERSTITION.



THE HOLOCAUST;
OR, THE WITCH OF MONZIE:
A POEM,
ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE CRUELTIES OF SUPERSTITION.

LAYS OF PALESTINE;
AND OTHER POEMS.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
ENCHANTMENT DISENCHANTED;
OR, A TREATISE ON SUPERSTITION.

BY THE REV. GEORGE BLAIR.

Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poetae;
Aut simul et jucunda et idonea dicare vitae.
Hor.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following Work is so much the creature of unlooked-for circumstances, that the author, who is painfully conscious of its many imperfections, and who trusts that his pretensions are as humble as his talents, is fain to take refuge under this *fact* as his apology for venturing, on the present occasion, within public gaze.

The Treatise on Superstition, which constitutes the first part of the volume, is the fruit of some thought, and the subject has occasionally, at distant intervals, occupied the writer's attention. At the same time, if any merit is claimed on the score of originality, it is not in point of matter but in point of method that he ventures respectfully to put forward this claim.

The subject is a vast one, and has been frequently treated. Of late years it has been ably discussed by two illustrious men—Sir Walter Scott and Sir David Brewster; each unrivalled in his own particular walk, and each elucidating the subject in his own style and vein. Sir Walter, of course, traverses the field as a poet, antiquary, and historian; Sir David, as an expo-

sitor of the natural mysteries of this universe. Both, in the respective departments which they explore, have enlightened the public with *previously unpublished facts*. The author of the following brief Treatise has humbler pretensions. The illustrative facts which he brings forward were chiefly furnished to his hand by these and by other writers; and he candidly confesses that he had no ambition to *invent stories*, or to cater for new instances, when old ones precisely in point, and reposing on authority far higher than his own, were already on record. He has aimed at nothing more than by keeping one object continually in view, and concentrating the scattered rays of light which have already been struck out around those particular points to which they ought to converge, to exhibit the subject in a stronger, clearer, and more convincing light, than has heretofore been shed upon it.

Sir Walter Scott's interesting work is a mine of information; but the arrangement is so defective, and the various matters are so loosely jumbled together as to leave upon the mind of the reader a comparatively vague and weak impression. It is, in short, rather an historical than philosophical disquisition. In point of arrangement, Sir David Brewster's excellent work on *Natural Magic* is infinitely superior. But neither of these authors discusses the subject on the same compendious plan which is attempted in the following short Treatise; in composing which the writer has made *conciseness and methodical arrangement* his chief aim, and has found *the labour of compression* to be his chief difficulty.

Part II. is a Poem of greater length than merit, and can hardly fail to prove deficient in interest, even to the local reader. It is now in print, and the author consoles himself under this misfortune, by the reflection that it cannot well be more worthy of reprobation than the barbarities of which it treats. It is chiefly to be regarded as a platform for the Notes, in which, if the author has not missed his aim, the reader will find more to arouse his indignation than merely to interest or amuse him. The poem was written almost *currente calamo*, and the choice of the subject which proved unexpectedly barren in incident was too late regretted when too late to be reversed.

Some portions of Part III. are the fruit of a humble attempt not merely to versify but to illustrate certain passages of Sacred history—a few of which to the cursory reader of the Bible appear to savour of the improbable. Such, for example, are *The Rescue of Lot*, and *The Libation; or, Friendship's Offering*.

The fourth and concluding section is chiefly the occasional and spontaneous fruit of swift-winged hours, which might otherwise have been idly spent. Most of these pieces are juvenile productions, were written without an aim, and were never intended or expected to see the light.

The volume, such as it is, the author now commits with extreme diffidence, and yet not without a ray of hope, into the hands of that local and limited circle for whom it is principally intended. Whatever reception it may meet with, he is conscious to himself that it contains nothing which, either in a moral or religious view,

he shall ever feel ashamed to avow, or regret that he has written. On this score he craves no indulgence and fears no critic. There may be errors in opinion or inelegancies in language; but what is here written, so far as it bears upon the great subject of religion, is written in sincerity of heart and with a good aim; and from the consciousness of this the author derives a satisfaction of which no man shall deprive him—a satisfaction which he keeps and ever *shall* keep as his own property—putting it at no man's mercy. Rash words may be uttered, revoked, and forgiven. But woe be unto that man, who, with pen in hand, and with leisure for calm reflection, deliberately ushers into the world a work on any subject, in which he believes that there is one word with the slightest tendency to evil. The man who can recklessly do this, is neither to be honoured nor envied. For my own part, I should tremble to participate in the fearful responsibility which he incurs. In one point of view, a Book is no trivial matter—it *cannot be recalled*; and, even though despised or neglected, it descends in some humble corner from one generation to another, exercising all its influence, either for good or for evil, over a wide surface—even when the author is forgotten.

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P A R T I.

ENCHANTMENT DISENCHANTED;

OR,

A TREATISE

ON THE

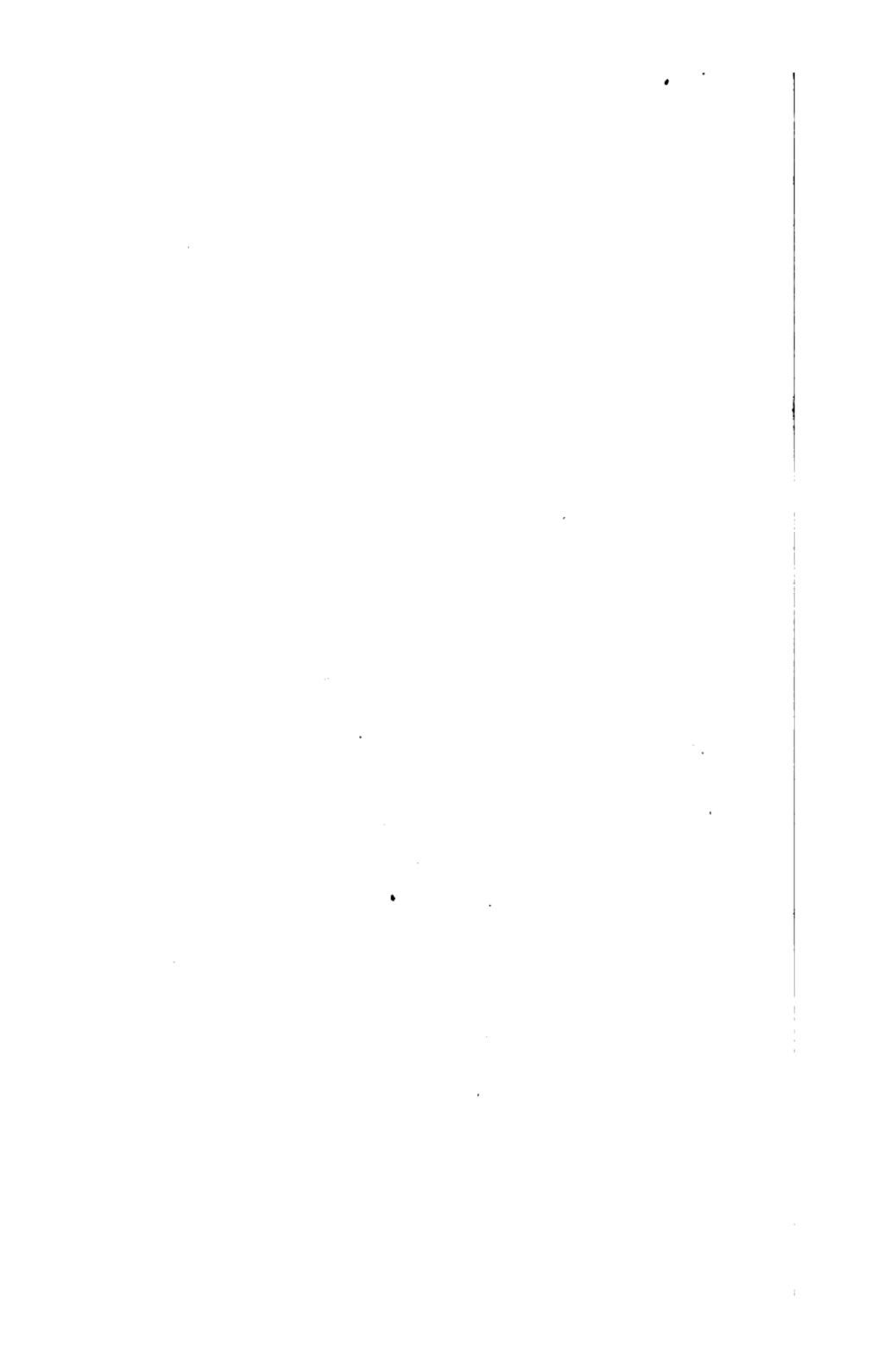
FORMS, SOURCES, EVILS, AND REMEDIES, OF SUPERSTITION;

DESIGNED TO SHEW THAT THE DIFFERENT FORMS WHICH SUPERSTITION HAS ASSUMED IN ALL AGES, WERE THE NATURAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE AT THE PERIODS AT WHICH THEY EXISTED; AND ILLUSTRATED BY ANECDOTES FROM SIR WALTER SCOTT'S LETTERS ON DEMONOLOGY, AND OTHER SOURCES.

Credo quia incredibile est.—*Popish maxim.*

Incredulity is the foundation of all wisdom.—*Aristotelian maxim.*

Prove all things.—*Scriptural maxim.*



ENCHANTMENT DISENCHANTED ;

OR,

A TREATISE ON SUPERSTITION.

CHAPTER I.

Superstition defined.—Importance of the subject.—This argued from the vast influence which it has exerted over human history.

SUPERSTITION may be defined—*a groundless belief in the existence of supernatural beings, and supernatural agency* ; and I regard the subject as possessing strong claims on the attention of mankind.

In the first place, the very prevalence of Superstition is matter of deep interest. In modern times, we have fortunately succeeded, to a great extent, in emancipating our minds from the degrading bondage of superstitious terrors ; but how long-continued, and how fearfully universal, has been the empire of such fancies ! Rational man is but of yesterday ! For thousands of years, he has bowed the neck to a great phantom, which, although impalpable and imaginary, has crushed him immeasurably below his rightful position in this universe. What a dark and humiliating picture is the ancient history of the world ! It exhibits man in two attitudes, and in two only—in the attitude of sanguinary strife, and in that of *fear and trembling*, at the shrine of imaginary deities, and from the influence of visionary alarms !

The extent to which *groundless beliefs* have exerted an influence over human history, is truly amazing. Men have undoubtedly been governed by error, more than by truth ; and if we, in this boasted *age of reason*, have escaped the galling servitude of darker times, let us not forget that we have narrowly done so—that not many years have yet elapsed, since intelligent individuals in this country, were believers in the horoscope ; and that even the illustrious author of the *Novum Organon*, was not ashamed to avow a modified belief in the mystical doctrines of astrology. It was not until the middle of last century, that the cruel and absurd laws, which doomed Witches to the flames, were repealed ; and even that wise and enlightened measure, gave great dissatisfaction to some classes of our countrymen, and drew forth a solemn protest against the growing infidelity of the age, from the pious and learned Mr. Brown of Haddington, and from a large and most respectable community of Scottish dissenters. In the memory of the parents of some aged people who are yet alive, it actually occurred, even in rational and sober Scotland, that a woman was committed to the flames with the full sanction of these laws. Have we not reason for devout gratitude that we have escaped—and escaped so narrowly—the uncomfortable darkness of these times ?

But indeed, even to this hour, there are manifold vestiges of Superstition still lingering in our own island ; and I venture to affirm, that there are few of my readers, who are not superstitious—who have not, at one time or other, experienced those thrilling and awful sensations, which the presence, or supposed presence, of supernatural beings, irresistibly inspires. In the hours of darkness, there is a spirit of superstition abroad, which we cannot repel ; and if, in that witching season, we traverse the sombre shades of some gloomy forest, or the vaulted recesses of some haunted castle, we find it impossible entirely to divest

ourselves of a certain undefinable feeling, which possibly all men have experienced, and which, although gloomy as the churchyard itself, is not absolutely unpleasant. Nay, it is a feeling in which we love to indulge. With what avidity and delight, did we listen in our younger days, to those very stories which inspired us with terror—which made solitary darkness intolerable, and peopled our midnight visions with bloody daggers and death-heads!

I make these remarks to shew, that Superstition is a subject which possesses a strong claim on our attention. It possesses this claim, from the very universality of its mysterious presence in the human breast. It has governed the world; and even yet, although tottering on its old throne of ignorance, it rules with undisputed sway the greater portion of the habitable globe, and in no clime or region is its influence altogether unfelt.

CHAPTER II.

Importance of the subject farther enforced, by a consideration of the number and magnitude of the *Evils* which it has occasioned.

BUT the manifold EVILS, to which Superstition has given rise, constitute in my opinion a yet stronger plea for directing attention to this subject. This chapter shall be devoted to a cursory exhibition of these Evils; and I have little hesitation in asserting, that the reader will find them to be of greater magnitude than people generally imagine.

In the first place, it cannot be denied, that *the superstitious man is the victim of groundless, and yet perpet-*

tual, apprehensions. He is a self-tormentor. He lives amid the darkness of an ideal world, which his guilty conscience, or his gloomy imagination, peoples with terrific spectres, and with horrible forebodings. In these more enlightened times, we cannot adequately conceive the amount of misery which our ignorant forefathers experienced from this cause.

It may be urged, however, in opposition to this view of the matter, that Superstition has occasionally produced an opposite effect, and actually exhilarated the spirits, in circumstances of difficulty and danger. I admit, that, in some cases, this has happened. In skilful hands, even the obliquities of our nature may be wrested to purposes of temporary advantage. We have all read of that celebrated commander, who happened, when disembarking on an enemy's territory, to miss his footing and fall prostrate on the earth. His troops uttered an exclamation of terror; but the man had the presence of mind to convert the omen into a good one, by immediately grasping the ground, and exclaiming that the gods had already *given him a hold of the country.* In like manner, we are told by Xenophon, that the discouragements, which the ten thousand Greeks experienced in the celebrated retreat, were suddenly dispelled, at a most critical moment, by the accidental *sneezing* of one of the leaders of the party. Such cases, however, are unquestionably exceptions to the general rule, which teaches that whatever rests not on truth is radically evil, and produces evil; and accordingly we find that advantage has been taken of superstitious feelings, in all ages, frequently to work mischief—seldom to work good; frequently to gain credit for impostures, or a name for sanctity, or a plea for ecclesiastical exactions—rarely or never to promote true knowledge, or to accelerate the advances of any real blessing. Even Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, though a deist—and, I believe, a sincere

one—prefaced his deliberate attack on Christianity by the sanction of an imaginary miracle.*

But let us view the Evils of Superstition in another light. The mental anxiety and the moral mischief, which this plague has generated, are facts, which reason must acknowledge, and which humanity may deplore, but which do not so generally, or so poignantly, arrest the feelings, as a narrative of corporeal sufferings. *Even such a narrative, however, is the history of Superstition.* It is a blood-stained chapter in the annals of this world !

What a mass of *voluntary torture*—of corporeal mortifications and self-inflicted stripes—all utterly useless for any moral purpose or religious end—is recorded in the drivelling legends of the Roman Catholic Church ! And what were the Crusades, but another specimen of such penances on a large scale ? It is true that these holy wars were instrumental for good : they introduced into Europe a more elevated tone of manners, and not a few substantial improvements : but the good which they achieved was incidental and gradual ; the evil was necessary, immediate, and immense. What countless multitudes of European victims, possessed by the Demon of Superstition, poured themselves forth, on these memorable

* Perhaps it is unnecessary to inform the reader, that this celebrated deistical writer, before publishing his work—*De Veritate prout distinguitur a Revelacione verisimili, possibili, et falso*—kneeled down, and entreated the Almighty for some sign, to direct and encourage him, in so important an undertaking, saying—" If it (i. e. the book) be for thy glory, I beseech thee, give me some sign from Heaven ; if not, I shall suppress it." His Lordship informs us, that though the sky was then perfectly cloudless, he had scarcely articulated this prayer, when he did hear a distant but distinct sound, from which he took encouragement to proceed. In all probability, he was himself persuaded, that the sound which he heard or imagined that he heard, was supernatural ; but in this, as in many other cases, we have reason to suspect, that the *wish was father to the thought.*

occasions, into the plains of Asia—embarking in a cause which was hopeless, and on an errand which was preposterous ; and enduring all manner of privation that they might suffer death !

The Crusades were peculiar to the Christian Church : penance is not so. Even to this day, in idolatrous nations, self-torturers are frequent.

But still, I admit, that if the votaries of Superstition had never gone farther than to lacerate their own bodies, we might have pitied their infatuation—we could scarcely have bewailed their sufferings. History, however, bears testimony to the fact, that they went much farther. *It brands Superstition with the crime of cold-blooded murder.* It points us to the ancient altars of all nations, and it shews us these consecrated shambles, stained with the heart's-blood of our fellow-men—of human beings dragged like bullocks to the place of death, and struck down to the earth by the ministers of Superstition. It reminds us, that in ancient times, this horrible and revolting spectacle occurred, not rarely but repeatedly ; and not in one or two nations only, but in every nation under heaven. It informs us, that even at this day the same sanctified barbarities are too frequently perpetrated in idolatrous nations.

But why have recourse to Idolatry, or to remote antiquity, as if Christendom and more modern times were exempt from the same cruelties ? Popery, impelled by the same tendencies, has performed her part well ! The *History of the Holy Inquisition* on the one hand, and the *Book of Martyrs* on the other, are memorials, which will continue to all ages, to vindicate the ministers of that creed from the scandalous imputation of regarding justice, or of exercising humanity.

Descending yet lower, and coming yet nearer home, we find the same cruelties perpetrated even by our own

Church, and by the rest of the Reformed Churches. I allude to the atrocities of the Witch-persecution—a work of darkness and of blood, in which Popery was far less active than our boasted Protestantism. The thousands and tens of thousands of miserable beings who suffered the inhuman barbarities of *the trial by torture*, as a certain preliminary to *the excruciating agonies of the stake*, have bequeathed to us the melancholy record of their wrongs, in even our own ecclesiastical and judicial registers. Who can peruse, without blushing for his creed and for humanity, those humiliating memorials of legal, wholesale, and religious murder?

But again, Superstition has proved itself on all occasions *a decided enemy to the truth*. It has taken upon itself to enact not only a religious, but even a scientific, creed; to intimidate the astronomer in his sublime researches, and to scare the geologist from the path of discovery—branding the former as a heretic, the latter as an infidel, and both as, from the nature and necessity of their vocations, antagonists to the true faith. We affirm, on the contrary, that *the discoveries of the physical sciences are the miracles and the prophecies of Natural Religion*; and that the God of the Bible is the God of Nature.

But farther, it is true that the superstitious world has endeavoured to preach down every innovation which proposed to contribute, through some new-found channel, to the happiness of mankind. *Machinery* was declared *profane*, inasmuch as it appeared to contravene that passage of Scripture which doomed man “to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow.” *Vaccination*, which diminishes the annual mortality fully nine per cent. and which has certainly contributed more largely to the well-being of society than any other single improvement of ancient or of modern times, was originally treated in the same man-

ner: at least, the analogous system of *inoculation*, when first introduced, was positively denounced from a certain pulpit in London, as “a diabolical operation tending to promote vice and immorality, inasmuch as it diminished the salutary terror which prevails regarding the uncertain approach of disease.”*

Lastly,—*Superstition has contributed more largely than even the efforts of avowed infidels to injure the interests of Religion.* This I assert, not of Idolatry—which must, however, be admitted to operate as the greatest bar to the spread of the Gospel—but of those forms of superstition which exist among Christians. The infidel who sneers at such superstitions, believes that he is sneering at Religion, and the world is of the same mind. Too much excuse has been given for such impious raillery. I have heard it affirmed by sincere but weak believers, that a storm which perhaps extended its devastations over thousands of square miles, destroying ships on the ocean which contained good men as well as bad, was a judgment sent expressly and exclusively to drown one man or boy, in the act of desecrating the Sabbath. The deep dissatisfaction which the repealing of the laws against Witchcraft created, has been already mentioned. It is such extravagancies as these, that put weapons in the hands of the scoffer. Separate Religion from reason and common-sense, and you effectually exclude it from the society of enlightened men. It belongs to Superstition to do this; and therefore it belongs to the true friends of Religion to remove

* This memorable Sermon against “the dangerous and sinful practice of inoculation” was preached by Mr. Edmund Massey, in St. Andrew’s Church, Holborn, July 8, 1722.

Even the use of Umbrellas, which conduce so largely to our health and comfort, was declared, when these articles were first introduced, to manifest ingratitude to that God who “sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust.”

the wheat from the chaff, and to demolish, if it be possible, those dark “chambers of imagery,” which do in reality form no part of a rational and sublime Religion; for the temple of the living God can have no agreement with idols, which are *nothing in the world*.

Whatever is thus evil and unsightly in all its developments—whatever uniformly leads to anxiety and unhappiness, and has prompted mankind, in all ages, to the infliction of voluntary and involuntary tortures, and of death itself in every form of cruelty—whatever has shown itself habitually opposed to the advancement of sound knowledge, and to all manner of improvement; and, above all, has contributed so largely, invariably, and unavoidably, to cast contempt upon Religion—must surely be radically evil in its own nature, and ought by every possible exertion to be at length annihilated.*

* If the reader imagines that it is so already, I beg to refer him to an interesting tract, published very recently by those remarkable men, the Messrs. Chambers, entitled *Religious Impostors*, and detailing, among other cases, those of Munzer and Bockholt (1525); Richard Brothers (1790); Johanna Southcott (died, 1814); Robert Matthews (1832); John Nicoll's Thoms, better known by his assumed title of Sir William Percy Honeywood Courtenay, who was shot, and his followers dispersed, in 1838; and last, but certainly not least, the Mormonite delusion, which is still I believe rabid in America, though Joseph Smith, the leader of the sect, was killed by a lawless mob on the 27th of June, 1844. It is only necessary to peruse the account of these remarkable cases—remarkable rather from the number of dupes, than from any other feature—to perceive, that there is yet a mass of superstitious infatuation smouldering and ready to break forth in even the civilized world.

CHAPTER III.

Remedies of Superstition—viz. Rational views of Religion—Early training—Sound knowledge; or such an acquaintance with existing principles and with natural laws, as shall enable us to attribute events, however mysterious, to their true causes—The exposition of such laws and principles stated to be the leading object of this Treatise—A preliminary objection, liable to be urged on religious grounds, anticipated, and repelled.

HAVING argued, in last chapter, the importance of this subject from various considerations, and, more especially, from the manifold evils, of which superstition has in all ages been the fruitful source, I proceed, in the next place, briefly to point out the remedies, which seem to me best calculated to arrest its progress.

The first is *the diffusion of rational and enlightened views on the subject of Religion*. Much good might be done, were those who instruct the people in Divine things, to enlarge more frequently than they do on the true nature of the Supreme Being—on the vastness and comprehensiveness of his providence—on the harmony between nature and revelation—on the fixed and undeviating character of those laws, by which he regulates the economy of this universe—on the fact, that the great work of revelation has been long complete—that the age of miracles is past—that we live not, like the Jews, under any extraordinary providence; and that events which occurred in Old Testament days, and even in the first ages of the Gospel dispensation, are no longer to be expected, or to be paralleled, in our altered circumstances. Correct and enlarged views on these important subjects, and on the general scope of revelation, would operate powerfully, and I believe effectually, in dissipating many superstitions, which still linger like shadows in the recesses of this country.

Connected with religious education, is *the training of youth*, and I have no doubt that much might be done to obstruct the early growth of superstitious feeling, by endeavouring to impress the same enlarged views, as speedily and as deeply as possible, on the youthful mind, instead of permitting the uninformed student to pore over the pages of the Old Testament without a commentator, and from thence to imbibe ideas with regard to the providence and character of the Almighty, and with regard to witchcraft, sorcery, and other things of that kind, which are afterwards difficult to correct, and almost impossible to eradicate.

Above all, extreme care should be taken to guard the rising generation, against the contagious influence of superstitious associates, and the not less pernicious influence of those fascinating books, which are calculated to poison the mind, and to replenish the memory, with that particular species of terrific nonsense, which in youth is most eagerly sought after, and throughout life is most obstinately retained.

But without undervaluing these important considerations, there can be little doubt, that the most effectual antidote to Superstition, is *a liberal education, and the acquisition of extensive and sound knowledge*. Ignorance is the mother of Superstition. It is only by enquiring into FACTS, that we can possibly divest ourselves of any *groundless belief*, and be able to attribute observed effects to their true causes. *In the remaining chapters of this Treatise, it shall be my object to illustrate this important point, and to furnish what I conceive to be the best remedy for Superstition, by demonstrating that the common objects of superstitious belief—whether supernatural beings, or supernatural agency—are, in the present advanced state of knowledge, easily explained on natural principles.* And, in furnishing the reader with

this expanded view of the principal REMEDY for Superstition, I shall farther have occasion to put forward the leading FORMS which Superstition has assumed, and the SOURCES from which it springs.

But before entering on this task, I feel it to be necessary to anticipate an objection, which, if not deliberately considered in this place, might unpleasantly suggest itself to the reader while engaged in the perusal of what follows.

It might possibly occur to him while so engaged, that the arguments about to be urged against the supernatural character of the objects of superstitious belief, are calculated, if good for anything, to tell with dangerous force against the miracles and prophecies of the Bible.

In reply to this, permit me to observe, in the first place, that when these words, *miracles* and *prophecy*, occur in the following pages, they are used without reference to Scripture-miracles or Scripture-prophecy.

In the second place, I assert, that while some of the arguments about to be brought forward, do certainly apply with the same force to the miracles and prophecies of the Bible as to those of recent times, I regard the two cases as radically distinct, for these three reasons :—1. I believe the instances of supernatural agency recorded in the Bible, to be far better authenticated than any modern instances. 2. The miracles of the Bible were undoubted miracles—the prophecies undoubted prophecies ; but this (as the following pages are intended to shew) cannot be affirmed of those of recent times. And 3. I can see a most important object in the miracles and prophecies of the Bible ; in those of modern pretenders I can see none. The use and purpose of the former are apparent : derangement had entered into the system of this world ; it was graciously designed that the impurity of our moral atmosphere should be corrected ; for this, and other great and important purposes, a revelation was necessary ; and that

revelation could not otherwise be recommended to our faith, than through the medium of those signs and wonders, which manifestly and irresistibly proved it of divine origin. Here was a great object to be accomplished, worthy to call forth the interposition of the Supreme Being himself. Modern miracles and modern prophecies have no such plea. These three considerations, viewed in connection with the whole scheme and character of revealed truth, permit me to repose with much comfort and satisfaction, in a strong conviction of the entire credibility of the inspired Record.

But the reader may perhaps object to the last of these arguments, that the Bible records miracles, to which it is not applicable—instances of preternatural agency, in which not the finger of the living God, but of infernal spirits, is the operating power—of magic, sorcery, witchcraft, and demoniacal possession—all of them indubitable instances of diabolical agency, and therefore not to be accounted for on the principles of those, who maintain the credibility of the Gospel-miracles, on the ground that these miracles were performed to establish the truth of God's Word. And, perhaps, it may be farther enquired, how it comes to pass, that if the Devil was permitted, in these ancient times, to exercise miraculous power, he has ceased to do so in the present, and in recent times? Of this serious and somewhat startling difficulty, I beg to hazard the following solution.

In the first place, with regard to the Old Testament dispensation—the immediate object of the Almighty in that dispensation, was to separate the Jews from the surrounding nations, and effectually to cure them of idolatry—in short to impress on them the great principle of *Monothelism*, so expressly inculcated in the first commandment. With this object in view, it was necessary to convince them, that the great Principle of Evil, who, in va-

rious forms and under various names, was the actual object of idolatrous worship, was utterly inferior in power to the living and true God. But this could not be accomplished without permitting that adverse and wicked Spirit to put forth his hand in the performance of supernatural works—as in the case of the Egyptian magicians who contended with Moses, and who, on that memorable occasion, were compelled to acknowledge, that the Power which enabled them to exhibit such astonishing feats, was baffled in the vain attempt to cope with Omnipotence.*

Our argument is much the same, with regard to the cases of demoniacal possession, and other developements of infernal agency, recorded in the New Testament. The principle of the Gospel-dispensation is FAITH ; but to produce faith, there must be grounds of conviction, and the believer—who is required to confide to the keeping of the Redeemer his eternal destiny—must be furnished with decisive proofs that this Redeemer is able to “make

* In accordance with the views stated above, I cannot help strongly deprecating the light and satirical language, in which it is too common among even intelligent men to speak of the great Spirit of Evil. We conceive very feebly, and very erroneously and foolishly, of this Being, if we shape our ideas with regard to him according to the current language of this world, investing him with form, colour, and substance, and giving him not only “a name,” but “a local habitation,” and a visible outline. Our conceptions on this subject would be infinitely more correct, and more worthy of rational and reflecting minds, were we to adopt the distinguishing tenet of that ancient sect, who imagined, with Zoroaster, that the universe was governed and pervaded by two great conflicting principles—a good and an evil—which continually contended for the mastery in well-balanced warfare. There is only one emendation to be made by us on this exploded opinion, and we approach the truth. We have only to suppose that this Evil Principle or Spirit, though, perhaps, powerful beyond human conception, is yet *finite*, and a *creature*, and therefore *immeasureably* inferior to that Good Spirit, who is not only “great and of great power,” but *omnipotent*, and the *Creator* of all things.

all things work together for good to them that love him." Now, the impediments to his salvation are these three—the World, the Devil, and the Flesh. But Jesus gave ample proofs, in the mighty works which he performed, of his power to "overcome the world." In the spotless purity of his own life, he clearly demonstrated, that he himself was superior to the Flesh. Thus far the Christian was furnished with complete security. But still, it remained that the Redeemer should manifest his power to defeat the great Adversary ; and, for this end, it was necessary to permit that wicked being to put forth some measure of supernatural agency. The permission was granted—Satan's "bonds were loosed"—and he was suffered to put forth his strength, that he might manifest his weakness—to tempt our Divine Lord himself—to torment his creatures—to appear on the surface of this world, as on a field of battle, only to be driven back by Omnipotence, with eternal disgrace ; that thus, security might be furnished—and how amply was it furnished!—to our Lord's disciples, that no power, however great, shall "be able to pluck any of them out of his hands."

Thus it is that I account for the existence of magic, witchcraft, and demoniacal possession, in Scriptural times, and for their non-existence in the present. *Infernal miracles* were permitted, not to manifest the power, but to demonstrate the comparative weakness of the Wicked One, when brought into immediate conflict and competition with the Supreme Being. The age of miracles is past ; and for the same reason that *Divine Miracles* are no longer performed to establish the truth of Revelation, analogous manifestations of infernal power, *which were only useful as a foil to these greater miracles*, have likewise been permitted to cease.*

* This view of the subject appears to me to furnish a strong ar-

Thus much in answer to a possible objection which I thought it expedient to remove out of the way, before proceeding, as I shall now do, to the main department of the subject.

CHAPTER IV.

Superstitions divided into two classes, viz. National or Idolatrous, and Private.—Idolatry accounted for on natural principles.

THE different forms, which a belief in the Supernatural has assumed, may be divided into two classes—National or Idolatrous, and Private Superstitions. It is chiefly to

gument in favour of the opinion, that the demoniacs mentioned in the New Testament were actually persons possessed by evil spirits—an opinion stoutly combated by the Socinians and others. *Farmer*, in his essay on the demoniacs of the New Testament, affirms that they were all either madmen or epileptics; and he reasons thus—“The ancients, in their treatment of persons supposed to be possessed, applied a great variety of medicines, according to the different symptoms of the patient. And our modern physicians, besides medicines, recommend bleeding, blistering, purging, shaving. But what effect can medicines and evacuations have upon the Devil, who is conceived to be spiritual and incorporeal? Why should it be thought that the same evil spirit is expelled from the body of *one* person by medicines that would not affect him in the body of *another*? or that he is sometimes driven away by hellebore, at other times drawn off by a blister?”

In like manner, Rousseau, in his *Troisième Lettre écrite de la Montagne*, begins an infidel and unmeaning rhapsody on the miracle of the herd of swine with these words—“Il y en a dans l’Evangile qu’il n’est pas même possible de prendre au pied de la lettre, sans renoncer au bon sens. Tels sont, par exemple, ceux des possédés.” He then relates sarcastically the circumstances of the miracle, and concludes thus—“Juste Dieu! La tête tourne: on ne sait où l’on est.”

the latter that I intend to confine the attention of my readers in this dissertation ; for no man pretends, that the ancient or modern objects of idolatrous worship, are really possessed of a supernatural character. At the same time, a Treatise on Superstition would be palpably defective without some remarks on so extensive a department of the subject ; and therefore, I propose to devote this one chapter to a brief consideration of the different objects of idolatrous worship, with the view of accounting for this form of superstition on principles inherent in human nature, and developed to a certain extent in all ages.

Doubtless the first source of idolatry was human depravity. The Divine Being, in his true character, was too holy and too pure for unregenerate man. The contemplation and the worship of such a Being, were found to be inconsistent with the gratification of his perverted appetites. And, moreover, the idea of a spiritual and omnipresent Deity, is too abstract and too vast for the comprehension of rude and semi-barbarous minds.

In all probability, the heavenly hosts—the sun, moon, and stars—were the first objects which usurped in the hearts of men the place and the worship of the true God ; and, indeed, if idolatry in any shape is entitled to our sympathy or our indulgence, it appears to me, that the worship of these heavenly bodies has some claim on both. It was *too natural* for imaginative and unenlightened man—more especially for that portion of our race who inhabited the glory and cloudlessness of oriental climes—not only to admire but to adore the radiant luminaries of heaven—the moon “ walking in her brightness ” through the depths of the blue vault—the stars glittering in their spheres like ever-burning lamps—the sun emerging in the east like a visible and effulgent god, dispersing the darkness of dewy night and the vapours of morn, revealing the unutterable glories of this magnificent world, and soliciting the earth

to pour forth her yellow fruits for the sustenance of man and beast ;—these were unquestionably more rational objects of adoration than the mass of heathen deities in general. For my own part, I can admire the poetry, if not the piety, of those eastern tribes, who ascended to the summits of their tall mountains before break of day, and there, with no other roof for their temple but the blue canopy of heaven, hailed with acclamation and devout worship, the first appearing of the great orb of day, as he majestically ascended from beneath the horizon, to pour light and life on this beautiful and happy world.

But view the matter in another light ! How shall we censure unenlightened men for believing that the heavenly hosts, with their mysterious movements, were intelligent and divine beings, when we call to remembrance the fact already stated, that not many years have yet passed away, since even in our own intellectual country, not a few statesmen and politicians believed in astrology, and actually imagined, that the stars of the firmament swayed the fortunes of mankind ? If even Lord Bacon himself was so far a believer in this exploded science, as to allow that *a well-regulated astrology* might possibly be found useful in exploring the future, surely we ought not to judge harshly, or to speak contemptuously, of those men, who, in a period of comparatively midnight darkness, addressed a sincere and devout homage to the glittering tenants of the firmament.

Another form of idolatry, and one which prevailed still more generally in later times, as indeed it does to this day, is the worship of *deified mortals*. Such were Jupiter, Minerva, Woden, &c. who seem to have been persons distinguished in their lifetime for certain extraordinary qualities, useful discoveries, or great actions, and on that account adored by posterity. It is well known that Bacchus, the god of wine, was a great eastern warrior, who,

in the course of his extensive conquests, may have introduced the vine into some countries where it was previously unknown, or at least so greatly improved the cultivation of that valuable plant, as to call forth the gratitude of mankind. Mercury was worshipped as the god and patron of thieves; probably because he had been expert at the business of relieving well-furnished travellers of the weight of their purses, and so on, through the whole category of this class of deities.

This form of idolatry may appear, at first sight, more difficult to account for, than that less degrading homage which was rendered to the heavenly hosts. How is it possible that mere mortals could ever be deified by mere mortals? I answer, that in all ages we see the working of the same principle. How often, even at this day, are men of superior attainments and distinguished talents regarded in their lifetime with extraordinary reverence, and almost deified at their death! The sepulchre withdraws them from our sight, but not from the incense of our homage. They moulder into dust like their fellow-men, but their very dust is venerated. We visit with a solemn and almost superstitious awe, the urn which encloses their remains, or the cenotaph hallowed to their memory. Surely, if a feeling like this exist so strongly and so generally, in days of boasted intelligence, prompting us to honour, with superstitious reverence, the departed worthies of a former age, it is easy to conceive, that in more primitive times, when everything which savoured of the marvellous was ranked with the supernatural, the same feeling would operate with irresistible force, proceeding from respect to reverence—from reverence to awful veneration—and from that to worship.

But how shall we account for the circumstance, that these deified mortals were most of them not less illustrious for their vices, than for their other qualities?

Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
Whose attributes were rage, revenge and lust!

I reply, that nothing else could be expected from a posthumous canonization, which enrolled mortals in the rank of deities, not on account of any *general excellence of character*, but simply because of some particular and brilliant qualities, either of body or of mind, which happened to extort the admiration of their fellow-men.

But the heathen world did not rest satisfied, either with worshipping the more conspicuous among natural objects, or with offering a foolish adoration to individuals of the human species. In several countries, and more especially in Egypt, the very *beasts that perish* were included among the objects of their senseless and indiscriminate worship. Divine honours were paid to the un-sightly images of bulls and of dogs—even of insects. Nay, there were living specimens of these animals maintained in regal state, honoured, pampered, and adored. **MAN**, more degraded than the very brutes, and prostrate in the presence of these irrational creatures, was certainly in that posture a most striking symbol of his own moral condition !*

And yet even animal worship is not utterly inexplicable. It had its own plea, though unquestionably a plea

* The Egyptians, among other superstitions, believed, that if the body were preserved from decay, the soul would return to its former tenement after the lapse of one thousand years. Hence their practice of embalming the dead: hence their catacombs or excavated places of sepulture. Hence, too, their massive and gigantic pyramids, which were simply catacombs above ground—strongholds intended to secure against injury or accident the embalmed bodies of their deceased monarchs, who disdained, even in death, to lie down with the motley population of the crowded catacomb. There is no doubt whatever that such was the object and purpose of these pyramids, about which so many learned conjectures have been hazarded.

founded on gross error. For instance, the Egyptians paid divine honours to a bird called the Ibis, because it proved a benefactor to their country, by destroying the eggs of the crocodile. The destruction of these eggs was doubtless a great blessing to the nation, and would have justified the use and enforcement of all legitimate means, not only to preserve, but to increase and multiply the bird. It would also have been rational and commendable to cherish a spirit of devout thankfulness to that gracious Being, who, if he had formed the crocodile, had formed likewise the Ibis. But can we conceive a more humiliating spectacle, than that of a rational creature robbing the Supreme Being of his rightful homage, to give it to a *beast*, which, if it was indeed an instrument for good, was unconscious of being so, and happened to be serviceable, only by following its own natural instincts, and greedy appetites !

Still, as I have said, even animal-worship had its own plea !

But want of space will not permit me to pursue farther these ancient tortuosities of the human mind—ancient, and yet modern—for, even to this day, the same solemn absurdities are extant. Volumes might be written on this subject; but I must now proceed to consider those forms of Superstition which belong more properly to ourselves, to our own country, and almost to our own day. In the meantime, I trust that these few remarks may tend to awaken and to foster, in the mind of the reader, a charitable spirit, even in judging of the heathen. My object has been, to show that in his strangest aberrations and wildest extravagancies, unenlightened man has invariably, and in all ages, been impelled by the common principles of our nature—by principles which, in similar circumstances, similarly operate in our own breasts; and were it not that we enjoy the inestimable advantages of more

light and knowledge, would inevitably push us into the same absurdities. In short, I have endeavoured, in this short chapter, not only to give a cursory view of the leading features of idolatry, but briefly to exhibit to the reader the *sources* from which it springs, and to show that the universal prevalence of this *form* of Superstition is easily to be accounted for on natural and well-known principles. If in this I have at all succeeded, I shall reckon myself happy.

CHAPTER V.

Private Superstitions—These distributed under four heads—I. The Phenomenon-Superstition—II. The Omen-Superstition.

I now come to treat of Private Superstitions, or those which have no special connection with objects of religious worship ; and these appear to me to admit of being reduced to four classes.

I. THE PHENOMENON-SUPERSTITION, or the ascription of mysterious Natural Phenomena to supernatural causes.

II. THE OMEN-SUPERSTITION, or the belief in omens, dreams, presentiments, and vulgar prophecies.

III. THE MIRACLE-SUPERSTITION, or the belief in sorcery, witchcraft, magic, necromancy, and Popish and other miracles.

IV. THE SPECTRE-SUPERSTITION, or the belief in ghosts, apparitions, spectres, and other supernatural beings.

These different forms of Superstition I shall consider successively; and I trust, that before proceeding very far, I shall succeed in convincing the intelligent reader, that *not only is it easy to account, in a satisfactory manner, for the general prevalence of these forms of belief, but that it would be much more difficult to imagine, how the mass of men could have avoided entertaining them, in times when even the enlightened and strong-minded were ignorant of facts, which are now well known, and of principles, which are now generally understood.*

I. THE PHENOMENON-SUPERSTITION, or the ascription of mysterious Natural Phenomena to supernatural causes.

It is well known, that in times past, all the unexplained phenomena of this universe were ascribed to the agency of supernatural beings. This is no longer the case, except among the utterly illiterate and degraded portion of mankind. One boon, at least, science has conferred—it has emancipated the world from the bondage of such ignorance. The time was, when comets were regarded as the dread portents of untold calamities, and when men beheld nothing in the aspect of an eclipse, but the terrible foreshadowing of Divine vengeance and of human woe. Science has achieved so vast a revolution, that *the case is now reversed*, and instead of regarding, with stupid apprehension, the comet or the eclipse, we now deliberately employ ourselves in calculating the recurrence of these sublime phenomena, and should rather have good reason to be dismayed were a comet *not to appear*, or an eclipse *not to occur*, precisely at the time which had been indicated by astronomical calculations.

Sailors are, generally, a superstitious race—a circumstance attributable partly to the wild solitude and sublimity of a seafaring life—partly to the strange optical phenomena, which frequently co-operate with “the won-

ders of the great deep," in powerfully impressing the imagination of the seafaring man. Among other strange apparitions, ships have been seen floating in the air, and coasts, far distant, and previously invisible on account of the convexity of the earth, have suddenly appeared looming through the clouds, and again vanished. Till lately, all this was a mystery; but it is so no longer. The refraction of light is now a familiar and well-understood principle, and perfectly accounts for these remarkable apparitions. In the bottom of a basin, place a piece of money or any other small object. Retire, till the edge of the basin has just concealed it from your view. Let the vessel be then filled with water, and the object will again become visible, precisely on the same principle, on which it is easy to explain these striking atmospherical phenomena.*

The land, too, has its wonders. Fairy-rings have been objects of superstitious veneration, from time immemorial; but instead of attributing them, as our forefathers did, to the merry moonlight dances of the *good people*, we are now disposed to look to the operation of some natural though yet unknown causes, for a rational and satisfactory explanation of these *lusus naturæ*. I am not aware that they have yet been satisfactorily accounted for; but on that point I cannot speak with certainty.†

* It is well known, that sailors have generally a superstitious aversion to set sail on a Friday. An American gentleman, actuated by a philanthropic desire to do away with this silly superstition, had a ship built, the keel of which was laid on a Friday—it was rigged on a Friday—launched on a Friday—on a Friday it put to sea, and probably it foundered on a Friday—at least, it was never more heard of—so that, by a most untoward accident, the gentleman's laudable intentions were entirely frustrated, and issued in strengthening instead of eradicating the superstition. There cannot, however, be a clearer demonstration of the folly and fallacy of this weak prejudice, than the fact, that Columbus began on a Friday the most eventful and successful voyage in the annals of the world—that voyage which issued in the discovery of the western hemisphere.

† In *Nicholson's Philosophical Journal* for January, 1806, there is

Another class of mysterious phenomena, which have largely contributed to excite superstitious terrors, are those luminous appearances sometimes observable in marshy places, and in churchyards. In all ages, the *ignis fatuus*, or Will-o'-the-wisp, has been regarded in the light of a demi-supernatural visitant; and it is not to be wondered at, that blue and wavy lights, occasionally seen by the countryman, in a dark night, hovering, it may be, over some newly-formed grave, were regarded as objects not altogether appertaining to this common-place world. Chymistry has compensated in some measure, for her ancient contributions to the school of magical delusion, by shedding satisfactory light on these mysterious *dwellers among the tombs*. There is a certain *gas*, or species of air, called *phosphuretted hydrogen*, which the chymist can produce at pleasure, by a not very difficult process. This gas is transparent and colourless, so that if you fill a glass vessel with it, you see nothing—it resembles common air; but allow it to come into contact with the air of the room, by removing the stopple of the vessel, and immediately it takes fire of its own accord, and burns with a bluish flame. Now, it so happens, that this *phosphuretted hydrogen* is produced in some marshy places, and more particularly in churchyards, where it is abundantly generated by the decomposition of decaying dead bodies; and hence we account for those luminous appearances, which have often haunted the imagination of many an affrighted traveller.

an article on Fairy-rings, in which the hypothesis, attributing them to lightning, is not favourably received; and the writer, apparently on very good grounds, rejects that explication also, which pretends to account for them, from the rapid generation of small fungi. The hypothesis hazarded by an ingenious writer, quoted in this article, that they are produced by a colony of small grubs, which eat and emigrate outwards from a central point, appears to me to be as plausible as any.

On this interesting and extensive class of phenomena, I cannot dwell longer.

II. THE OMEN SUPERSTITION, or the belief in dreams, omens, presentiments, and vulgar prophecies.

This form of Superstition, I account for, on five principles. 1. Obscurity and ambiguity. 2. Self-caused fulfilments. 3. Natural sequence. 4. Coincidence. 5. The principle, that while those few cases, in which the event predicted or prognosticated actually happens, are carefully remembered and treasured up, the numberless cases, in which the event falsifies the presage, are buried in oblivion.

1. *Obscurity and ambiguity*.—Who is not aware, that omens, prophecies, and dreams, admit of very great latitude of interpretation ? The consequence is, that whichever of two, three, or it may be ten, different events happens, is regarded as the meaning and fulfilment of the prognostic. The language of prophecy is proverbially the language of obscurity and ambiguity. The ancient oracles were perfect masters of these arts of mystification.—A certain individual, who wished to put the oracle of Apollo to the test, approached with a live sparrow in his hand, which he concealed under his cloak, and inquired whether that which he held in his hand was dead or alive ?—intending, if they answered that it was dead, to produce it alive ; and if they answered that it was alive, to produce it dead. The sagacious diviners were not thus to be outwitted. Suspecting his plot, they replied, with their accustomed circumspection, that it was in his own power whether that which he held should live or die.—The case of Croesus is well known. This *wealthy* monarch consulted the same oracle as to whether he would be successful in the war which he meditated against Cyrus. He was told he would destroy a great kingdom. Croesus was

satisfied ; but the kingdom which he destroyed was his own.

2. *Self-caused fulfilments.*—There can be no doubt, that many prophecies, omens, dreams, and presentiments, have contributed in great measure to accomplish themselves. Let a man who labours under serious illness be fully persuaded that he is not to recover, and the certainty is, that the depression of spirits which this presentiment necessarily occasions, must operate as a bar to his recovery. Dreams, omens, and prophecies, work themselves out in the same way. There is a case on record, of a native of Berlin, who was told by a fortune-teller, whom he happened to have irritated, by expressing a contempt for his art, that he would die on a scaffold. The prophecy fulfilled itself—it so preyed upon the poor fellow's mind, that at length he murdered a child, to get rid of his life *by the hand of justice*. Another remarkable instance of self-fulfilled prophecy is that which procured the death of Codrus, the last king of Athens. The Heraclidae consulted the oracle as to the issue of the war which they had undertaken against this state. The reply was, that they would certainly succeed, if they did not happen to kill the Athenian king. The Heraclidae were careful to publish this answer—it reached the ears of Codrus, who was too much of a patriot to value his own life when the safety of his country was at stake. He disguised himself as a private soldier, proceeded to the camp of the enemy, and there succeeded in fastening a quarrel on the first man he met, by whom he permitted himself to be slain. When the person of Codrus was recognized, the Heraclidae despaired of success, and withdrew without offering battle.

3. *Natural sequence.*—There can be no doubt, that the accomplishment of many omens, is attributable to a natural, though concealed connection, between the prognostic and the event. Certain peculiarities in the flight of birds,

in the stinging of insects, in the sound of distant waters, &c. are regarded, and in some cases not without reason, as indicative of coming changes in the weather. The science of meteorology is still so young, and is attended with so much difficulty, that little of a positive or satisfactory character is yet known on these deeply interesting subjects. In the meantime, the error consists in attributing to supernatural causes, what is purely natural, and will yet be explained.

The following anecdote, from an interesting work by a medical gentleman, is strikingly illustrative of the point now under consideration :—“ In the case of E. F. who was labouring under most serious and alarming illness, one feature of which was profuse hemorrhage from the nose, it being very hot weather, the window was kept open during the whole night. It so happened, that a *dog* was observed to howl most piteously underneath the window ; a *death-watch* repeated its ominous monitions behind the bed ; a *bat* flew into the room and extinguished the candle ; and a *raven*, passing, alighted upon the window-ledge, pecked with his beak, and flapped with his wings against the (other) unopened window. Of course, the nurses all concluded, that E. F. must die ; but E. F. recovered, and the whole concurrence of circumstances, would find an easy explanation, in the attraction afforded by the light to the bat, its irritation to the watchful dog, the odour of blood to the ill-omened croaker, and perhaps the animating summer-weather to the ticking insect.”

4. *Coincidence*.—To this principle, I have no hesitation in attributing by far the greater part of the apparently miraculous cases, in which dreams, modern prophecies, omens, &c. have been actually fulfilled. If the limits of this Treatise permitted, I could mention a variety of the most striking coincidences, which have occurred within my own experience, and which, although exceedingly trifling

in themselves, appeared to me to derive an adventitious importance, from their bearing on this subject. In the meantime, I present the reader with the following case from Mrs. Trollope's *Paris and the Parisians* :—

“ Several years ago,” says this lady, “ while passing a few weeks in Paris, I had a conversation with a Frenchman upon the subject of old maids, which, though so long past, I refer to now for the sake of the sequel which has just reached me. The circumstance was this—In the conversation above-mentioned, the Frenchman affirmed, that if any countrywoman of his were to find herself in the situation of an old maid, she would certainly drown herself. ‘ I know one such, however,’ said a lady who was present, ‘ and I think she must be considerably past thirty.’ ‘ C'est une horreur ! ’ replied the Frenchman, adding rather mysteriously in a half-whisper—‘ Trust me, she will not bear it long ! ’ ” The sequel above alluded to was this—When Mrs. Trollope returned to Paris a few years afterwards, she learned that the unfortunate lady *had actually drowned herself*. “ Terrible as this *dénouement* was,” she remarks, “ it could not be heard with the solemn gravity it called for, after what had been said respecting her. Was ever coincidence more strange ! My friend (*the lady who informed her of the circumstance*) told me, that on her return to Paris she mentioned this catastrophe to the gentleman who had seemed to predict it ; when the information was received by an exclamation quite in character—‘ God be praised ! then she is out of her misery ! ’ ”

If cases such as this occasionally occur, why not attribute in like manner to coincidence the peculiar death of Charles IX. that unhappy monarch, who permitted the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and of whom the historian says—“ He had shed much blood, and now his own blood oozed out at every pore.” The case of Henry IV. who,

some days previous to his assassination, was oppressed with a strong *presentiment* that his death was near, may either be explained on the same principle, or attributed to some threatening intimation, which perhaps he had privately received.*

5. *The principle, that, while one out of many dreams, prophecies, omens, and presentiments, is accidentally fulfilled, and on that account carefully treasured up and remembered, the thousands and tens of thousands which are not realized are forgotten and buried in oblivion.* This is a position which no man will dispute, and I regard it as the master-key to the mystery. How many

* While the author was residing in one of the Northern Departments of France some years ago, he was told the following case by a gentleman quite worthy of credit, and to whom the circumstance happened. This gentleman had lately been down with his family at Gravelines, for the benefit of the sea-bathing. While residing there, he heard that a public lottery was about to be drawn, but had no intention of purchasing a ticket, till he happened one night to dream *three several times*, that a lady appeared to him, who told him to remember, that 75 was the prize. Happening next morning to stumble on the *bureau*, and having 15 francs in his pocket, he hazarded this sum in purchasing a share of No. 75. The visionary lady was correct: 75 was the most lucky number, and his 15 francs brought him 150. No man will pretend that this was anything more than mere coincidence, or that Providence would interfere in an extraordinary manner to put 135 francs into the pocket of a man who had already more than a competence.

The following very remarkable case occurred to the author himself:—About six or seven years ago, it happened that a certain public situation in the City of Perth became vacant. Two candidates appeared—the first was named *Greig*, the second *Law*. The author, alluding to the well-known motto, *Pro Rege, Lege, et Grege*, jocularly remarked, that it would be amusing, if the name of the next candidate were *King*. Imagine the astonishment, both of himself and of the persons to whom he had made the remark, when this actually happened. *King* is by no means a common name; and really the coincidence here mentioned, had it happened in circumstances of a more serious and impressive character, could not have failed to be regarded as supernatural.

prophecies have been uttered which have never been accomplished, and on that account are no more heard of! What a multitude of omens and prognostications, beginning in *conjecture*, terminate in *nothing!* What myriads of dreams—of wild fancies and absurd visions—pass successively, night after night, through the pillow'd heads of the myriads of our sleeping population! Is it wonderful that *some* of these are realized, or would it not rather be surpassingly miraculous if *many* of them were not? Our dreams are generally the vague shadows of our daily occupations. They dimly represent, in pantomime, the whirl of reality, which goes on around us; and I do hold it to be altogether surprising, not that so many of them are realized, but rather that so many of them are not. It happens, however, that when, from the operation of any of the above-mentioned principles, one dream or prophecy is accomplished, the circumstance is recorded with superstitious awe, and remembered with religious care; while the numberless cases in which nothing ensues are permitted, as a matter of course, to sink into oblivion.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MIRACLE-SUPERSTITION.

1. Magic, Sorcery, &c.—2. Curing Diseases.—3. Raising the Dead.

I HAVE now, in prosecution of my proposed plan, to consider—

III. THE MIRACLE-SUPERSTITION, or the belief in Sorcery, Magic, Witchcraft, &c.

In attempting to account for the prevalence of this belief, let us first direct our attention to that class of miracles, or supposed miracles, which were ascribed to sorcery or magic; and, secondly, to those pretended miracles, which consisted in curing diseases or in raising the dead, and which were generally performed by the ministers of religion, or by persons of superior sanctity.

1. *Magic, Sorcery, &c.*—We all know, that, in the days of our ancestors, persons pretending to a knowledge of these arts abounded; and that, by the assistance of certain spiritual beings, they were generally believed to perform *signs and wonders* of a very extraordinary character.

Are there any of these men in the present day? I reply that there are many—perhaps more than ever! They have changed their name—they have changed also their pretensions—they have sunk in their preposterous demands on the credulity of the public; but with all these changes, what are our *modern jugglers*, but the ancient magicians? Are they not precisely the same class of men? They are now indeed too wise to put forth, because the public are too wise to admit, their former ridiculous pretensions to supernatural power, or to intercourse with spirits. Yet were it not the case that the feats, which these artists perform, are acknowledged to be *mere trick and sleight of hand*, even we ourselves should be compelled to believe, that they were actually performed by *the black art*. Is it then at all surprising, that in times when knowledge was scanty, and the belief in the supernatural abundant, such clever exhibitions of legerdemain were ascribed to magic and enchantment?

It is indeed fortunate for our modern *wizards of the north*, that they live in an age which can appreciate their dexterity, without ascribing their apparent miracles to supernatural causes. In former times, magic and witch-

craft were put much on the same level ; and any individual, found guilty of performing such feats and transformations as are now daily exhibited by expert jugglers, would have been in danger of expiating his dexterity, or rather his supposed intercourse with the devil, in the house of correction, or in the flames. Such men coveted a most dangerous reputation ; and many were in these days persecuted on most frivolous charges, who actually denied that they had any intercourse with invisible beings ; simply because they were guilty of doing marvellous actions, or making marvellous discoveries, which other men chose, in their wisdom, to attribute to the devil. The immortal Friar Bacon, who was born in the year 1214, and who invented gunpowder, and made other discoveries, was actually branded with the name of a magician : the friars of his own order refused to admit his works into their library : in 1278 he was committed to prison ; and at last he was compelled by persecution to abandon the house of his order.

Such, in those days, was the reward of extraordinary talent, and successful research. But why wonder at this, when, even so late as in the year 1690, *a horse which had been taught a few surprising tricks, was condemned by the sagacious court of the Holy Inquisition to die for his profound learning ?*

The feats of European jugglers are truly wonderful—sufficiently so, to create in the minds of unenlightened spectators, a belief that they are really the effects of magic ; but if highly respectable authority may be trusted, the art has attained a much greater perfection in Asiatic countries. A Brahman, who died some years ago at Madras, and who did not exhibit for money, but as an act of courtesy, was accustomed occasionally to sit cross-legged in the air, without any visible support, a few feet distant from the ground. The stories related by Ibn Batuta, the

celebrated Mahometan traveller, are hardly credible, even though related by that respectable personage. For instance, he informs us of two Yogees, who appeared before the Emperor of Hindostan, while he himself had the honour of being present, and to his great terror, one of these men assumed the form of a cube or chest of drawers, and rising slowly to the ceiling, remained there for some time, apparently suspended on nothing. We can hardly give credit to this story, and indeed we do not wonder, that the astonished traveller fainted, and "fell to the earth." That Egyptian miracle, the "magic mirror of ink," is much better attested ; though, according to Mr. Lane's account, almost equally incredible. There can be no doubt, that Mr. Lane was actually told by the boy the exact appearance of Lord Nelson ; but Lord Nelson was a public and well-known man ; and I was lately informed, by a gentleman residing in this country, of a case which had signally failed. This gentleman wrote to a friend in Egypt, requesting him to make trial of these Egyptian magicians. His friend answered, in next letter, that he had done so—that he had named a certain lady, whom they both knew—and that the boy, looking into the ink in his hand, described an old man with a long beard !

Allowing however for a few such failures, enough of these *miracles* have been performed, both at home and abroad, to account for, and even to justify, the belief which our ancestors implicitly reposed in sorcery and enchantment.*

* I have here said nothing about Witchcraft in particular, as the popular belief in this imaginary crime was purely the effect of ignorance. Any sudden evil, such as disease among cattle, blight in corn, a destructive storm, wasting disease, caterpillars, &c. was attributed to Witchcraft. It would be difficult, in these cases, to trace a connection between the effect and the supposed cause ; and yet to disbelieve in witchcraft, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was nothing less than to incur the charge of Atheism.

2. *Healing of diseases, and curing of bodily infirmities.*—Pretended miracles of this kind, I attribute partly to the force of imagination, and partly to imposture.

If the cure, said to have been performed by Prince Hohenlohe, on a nun at the convent of New Hall, near Chelmsford, in Essex, was not actually miraculous, it is only to be ascribed to the power of imagination operating on the frame of the patient. This prince performed his miracles, without leaving his residence at Bamberg, by simply uniting his earnest prayers with those of the person or persons, who solicited his assistance, at some particular day and hour previously appointed; and for some time his reputation was so great, that requests for his pious intercession poured in upon him at the average rate of fifty letters *per diem*.

Similar to the miracles of this prince, were those which were supposed to be performed by the royal touch, in scrofulous cases. The belief in the sanatory power of this *sovereign remedy*, is certainly of very ancient date; but appears to have operated most strongly, in the days of Charles I. and II. after which it rapidly declined. Will the reader believe, that the number of persons touched by Charles II. from May 1660 to 1680, amounted to the vast multitude of ninety-two thousand one hundred and seven,—being at the average rate of twelve every day? If, in these cases, any cures were effected, it is impossible

This is very naturally set forth in the following passage from the *Amber-Witch*:—“ Meanwhile,” says good Abraham Schweißler, pastor of Coseron, “ it befel, that the young *nobilis* Rudiger of Nienkerken, came riding one day to gather news of the terrible witchcraft, that went on in the village. When I had told him all about it, he shook his head doubtfully, and said he believed that all witchcraft was nothing but lies and deceit; whereat I was struck with great horror, inasmuch as I had hitherto held the young lord to be a wiser man, and now could not but see, that he was an *Athiest*.”—*Amber-Witch.* Cap. xiii.

to ascribe them to the prayers or piety of the operator, for Charles II. was certainly a very different character from Prince Hohenlohe.

But allowing to the workings of imagination a certain measure of miraculous efficacy, who can doubt that pious frauds and knaveries, have chiefly contributed to gain credit for modern miracles of this cast ? It is well known, that in the Popish Church, the end is regarded as justifying the means ; and if the vulgar reverence for the priesthood could only be fostered and promoted by the working of apparent miracles, artifice was deemed *pious*, and imposture *devout* !

But how could the multitude be so easily duped ? In answer to this, I have merely to observe, that, even in very recent times, instances have occurred of *malingering* or simulating diseases, exhibiting a degree of address, perseverance, and ingenuity, altogether surprising, and which render it no difficult matter to account for the apparently miraculous cures, to which priestcraft and popery have laid claim. In the British army, nothing was of late years more common than this species of deception, practised with the view of obtaining a discharge and a pension, or at least a relaxation from duty. Cases have occurred, in which the knaves, rather than confess, have submitted to severe operations with amazing fortitude ; and the length of time through which such deceptions have been practised, is almost incredible. Paralysis, deafness, and general debility, have been simulated for years ; and so adroitly as to baffle detection. The impudence of these clever impostors, has often been equal to their dexterity. In one case, a trooper in the 12th regiment, pretended for a great length of time, that he had lost the use of his right arm. Suspicions were entertained ; but he was at last successful : he received his discharge as an incurable subject, and was assisted with great difficulty to

the top of the coach ; on which, however, he was no sooner fairly seated, than he waved his paralytic arm in token of farewell to his comrades,—maliciously expressing his triumph in three hearty cheers, as the coach drove away. Another case was that of a soldier, who pretended to have totally lost the use of his lower extremities. This man likewise persevered, till he received his discharge : he then caused himself to be conveyed in a cart to the Phoenix Park, on a field-day, to witness, as he pretended, the evolutions of the soldiery ; and no sooner did he reach a conspicuous spot, in front of the regiment, than he leaped out of the cart, bounded thrice into the air, and disappeared with the speed of a grey-hound.

Now, it is easy to conceive, that a great many of the Roman Catholic cures, which were esteemed miracles, may have been performed on persons, who, in compliance with their instructions, had skilfully and perseveringly continued, for a length of time, to simulate diseases in this manner. A praiseworthy example was set by one of the Popes, who, previous to his instalment in the Papal chair, appeared to have one foot in the grave ; but no sooner was he dignified with the triple crown, than a pretended miracle was performed—*incredible to relate!*—his Holiness renewed his youth ; and his step, lately so tottering, became all of a sudden firm and elastic.

3. *Cases of raising the dead.*—I am not at this moment aware of any one respectably-supported case, in which Popish imposture was carried so far, as to have actually pretended to raise the dead to life. I believe, however, that such impious pretensions have been put forth ; and I can easily imagine how they might have been worked out. It clearly appears, from established instances on record, that certain individuals have possessed the power of *simulating death itself*. The case of Colonel Townshend is pretty generally known. We have it on

the respectable authority of Dr. Cheyne, who witnessed the fact, that this gentleman had actually the power of voluntarily suspending every symptom of animation—he ceased to breathe ; his heart ceased to beat ; he became, to all appearance, a dead man, and continued in this state about half-an-hour—when again, by some inexplicable act of volition, he brought himself back to life. This man would certainly have been a treasure in the hands of a miracle-monger. But Colonel Townshend's is not the only case. One equally astonishing, and to all appearance equally authentic, is that of the Indian at Jaisalmer, who permitted himself to be buried for the space of an entire month, and was disinterred alive. In the following case, the appearance of a murdered man seems to have been assumed with considerable skill, though not with absolute success :—“ When some officers in India were breakfasting in the commander's tent, the body of a native, said to have been murdered by the sepoys, was brought in, and laid down. The crime could not be brought home to any one of them ; yet *there* was the body. A suspicion, however, crossed the Adjutant's mind ; and, having the kettle in his hand, a thought struck him, that he would pour a little boiling water on the body. He did so ; upon which, the murdered remains started up, and scampered off.”*

These cases show, that in a credulous and ignorant age, the raising of the dead to life might easily have been added to the other miracles of modern times.

* *Sketches of Imposture, Deception, and Credulity*—an interesting work, to which the author has been largely indebted in this Chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPECTRE-SUPERSTITION.

This accounted for on four principles.—1. Natural objects indistinctly seen.—2. Unexplained events.

I now come to consider, in the last place,

IV. THE SPECTRE-SUPERSTITION, or the belief in ghosts, and in the visible appearance of supernatural beings.

No form of Superstition has been more general than this;* and I attribute it to four different sources—viz. 1. The delusion produced by fantastic natural objects indistinctly seen, and aided by imagination and mental excitement. 2. A combination of accidental and mysterious

* It is certainly an amazing proof of man's natural propensity to this form of superstition, and of the powerfully contagious influence of general opinion, to find even the Roman poet and philosopher, Lucretius—that thorough-bred naturalist, who even denied the existence of the soul—not only expressing his belief in ghosts, but attempting to account for their existence, by affirming that all bodies throw off thin films or shells,

As heifers cast the membranes of their horns,
And snakes their glittering coat among the thorns.

It must be admitted, that, granting the truth of this amazing theory, it fully accounts for the otherwise unaccountable resemblance between dead men and their spiritual representatives. Virgil gives the shade of Deiphobus, even in the infernal regions, the exact and inglorious semblance of that murdered Prince:—

Atque hic Priamiden, laniatum corpore toto,
Deiphobum vidit, lacerum crudeliter ora,
Ora, manusque ambas; populataque tempora raptis
Auribus, et truncas inhonesto vulnera nares.

Æn. VI. v. 494.

circumstances, which, in the absence of the knowledge of some explanatory particulars, is calculated to impress the conviction that a ghost or other apparition has been seen, even on the mind of a person who is neither labouring under mental excitement, nor suffering from the influence of a morbid imagination. 3. Trick and imposture. And, 4. The astonishing *spectra*, which proceed from a diseased state of the corporeal functions, operating on the organ of sight.

1. *The delusion produced by fantastic natural objects indistinctly seen, and aided by imagination and mental excitement.*—I venture to affirm, that there is not one of my readers who has not been occasionally deceived in this manner. How easy it is, with a very little aid from the imagination, to trace amid the changeful forms of the summer clouds the appearance of castellated turrets and other similar objects! Or, when seated by the fire-side in a dull winter evening, how readily does the eye, in a playful and half-dreamy humour, detect among the bright embers the figures of as many grotesque animals as entered the ark! Where is that man who has not, at one time or other, in the dim hour of twilight, mistaken a pole, bush, or other natural object, for some phantom of terror?

A rather striking instance of this species of illusion recently occurred to a gentleman, with whom I have the pleasure of being intimately acquainted. Mr. —— was returning about ten o'clock, P.M. to a house in the immediate vicinage of Perth, in which, for the sake of security afforded by his presence, he had taken up his nightly quarters for some time during the temporary absence of the proprietor, a near relative of his own. In these circumstances, his mind was very apt to run on vagrants and intruders; and as he walked up through the shrubbery to the door of the house, in the dun twilight of a long summer evening, he saw a dark figure, which at the time he

had no doubt whatever was that of a man, standing on the threshold. He advanced—and immediately the man began to move away towards the east corner of the house, behind which he quickly disappeared. Mr. —— then entered the house, and asked the servant whether any person had been calling there at that time. He was told that some strolling fellow had been calling a short time previously. Mr. —— replied that he had seen him as he came up, and that he had no doubt the fellow was still loitering about the premises. He then went out to institute a strict search for the supposed vagabond; and taking the watch-dog off his chain, he explored, not without some little trepidation, the garden and shrubbery—but in vain. Mr. —— then walked down the avenue to the public road, and having asked a policeman whether he had seen any suspicious person passing, was answered in the negative. This confirmed him in the idea that the scoundrel was still about the premises; and returning to the house to make a farther search, he again saw, as he advanced, the man standing at the door, from which, as on the previous occasion, he sneaked away, and made his escape round the east corner. Mr. ——, however, now began to suspect some illusion, and paused to bethink himself. He then stepped a few paces backwards, and the figure of the man again immediately made its appearance; he advanced, and it again vanished. He repeated this test two or three times; and then succeeded in thoroughly eradicating his first impression, by discovering the deception to be produced by two bushes, seen darkly between him and the house, which from his own motion inclining to westward, appeared to move eastward as he advanced, and becoming invisible at the corner of the house in consequence of a dark hedge which there formed the back-ground, instead of the light-coloured wall, the dark object appeared to him to turn the corner and dis-

appear behind it. A friend very justly remarks on this incident, that had these bushes assumed the appearance of some terrific or supernatural object, and had Mr. —— been credulous or superstitious, he might have fainted on the spot, and the mystery have remained unravelled.

Another case, strikingly illustrative of the same species of delusion, is stated by Sir Walter Scott in his First Letter on *Demonology and Witchcraft*. It happened to a literary friend of his own, who, on the occasion referred to, "was engaged during the darkening twilight of an autumn evening, in perusing one of the publications, which professed to detail the habits and opinions of an illustrious poet, lately deceased ;" and with whom the reader of the book had been intimately acquainted. "It was," says Sir Walter, "when laying down his book, and passing from his sitting-room into an entrance-hall, fantastically fitted up, through which the moon was beginning to shine, that the individual of whom I speak, saw, right before him, and in a standing posture, the exact representation of his departed friend, whose recollection had been so strongly brought to his imagination. He stopped for a single moment, so as to notice the wonderful accuracy, with which fancy had impressed, upon the bodily eye, the peculiarities of dress and posture of the illustrious poet. Sensible, however, of the delusion, he felt no sentiment, save that of wonder, at the extraordinary accuracy of the resemblance ; and stepped onward towards the figure, which resolved itself, as he approached, into the various materials of which it was composed. These were merely a screen, occupied by greatcoats, shawls, plaids, and such other articles as usually are found in a country entrance-hall."

Another case, still more striking, is mentioned by the same author. "In a house, the back part of which ran at right angles to an Anabaptist chapel, a young lady

used sometimes to indulge the romantic love of solitude, by sitting in her own apartment in the evening, till twilight, and even darkness, was approaching. One evening, while she was thus placed, she was surprised to see a gleamy figure, as of some aerial being, hovering as it were against the arched window in the end of the Anabaptist chapel. Its head was surrounded by that halo which painters give to the Catholic saints ; and while the young lady's attention was fixed on an object so extraordinary, the figure bent gracefully towards her more than once, as if intimating a sense of her presence, and then disappeared." This singular vision was observed the succeeding night by the young lady's father, to whom she communicated the circumstance, and the whole family were considerably alarmed, until, as Sir Walter informs us, "a strict research established a natural cause for the appearance on the window. It was the custom of an old woman, to whom the garden beneath was rented, to go out at night to gather cabbages. The lanthorn she carried in her hand, threw up the refracted reflection of her form on the chapel window. As she stooped to gather her cabbages, the reflection appeared to bend forward ; and that was the whole matter."*

Similar cases might be multiplied, and probably the reader's own experience, or that of his friends or acquaintances, may supply him with several. In reference to this last case, I have merely to observe, that had not the old woman returned to pull her cabbages on any night subsequent to that on which the vision was first seen, there can be no doubt that this young lady would have lived and died in the very natural belief—a belief which the circumstances seemed almost to justify—that she had really seen a saint, or angel, or some spiritual being ; and how

* *Letters on Dem. and Witch.* Lett. x.

many of her friends would her earnest and sincere testimony, perhaps have converted to the same creed ! And again, as to the other two instances above narrated (that one told by Sir Walter Scott, referring, as I suppose, to Lord Byron), it is morally certain that many similar illusions have occurred, in which it was not possible, by actual examination, to correct the erroneous impression, or in which there was wanting that moral fortitude or philosophical curiosity, which prompted in these instances a deliberate examination. In the gloom of night, or amid the roar of tempest or of battle, when the mind is vehemently excited, and when every circumstance is unfavourable to reflection and to calm inquiry, the momentary apparition of such spectacles sinks irresistibly into the mind, and remains there indelibly and for ever. And hence, it is generally amid the rush and confusion of exciting scenes, that supernatural appearances have been observed—precisely on the same principle, that the evil conscience of the midnight assassin is continually presenting to his horrified imagination, in every natural object that intercepts his flight, the mangled and bloody corpse of his murdered victim, and the wild sound of his death-shriek in every howl of the tempest. Let us rest assured, that many stalking spectres and grim ghosts have been nothing but such fanciful images, and not a whit more supernatural than a dark clump of shrubbery, a screen covered with clothes, or the reflection of an old woman gathering cabbages !

2. *A combination of mysterious circumstances, which, in the absence of the knowledge of some explanatory link of the chain, is calculated to impress the conviction that a ghost or other apparition has been seen, even on the mind of a person, who is neither labouring under mental excitement nor suffering from the influence of a morbid imagination.*—The nature of this fertile source of

a belief in apparitions, will be best understood from the two following cases ; both of which the reader will find stated at length in Sir Walter Scott's admirable *Letters on Demonology*.

The first is that of a Teviotdale farmer, whose road from market compelled him to pass the corner of a church-yard, on the wall of which, immediately before him, he saw a pale female form, at one time remaining perfectly still and silent, at other times brandishing its arms and gibbering to the moon. Though considerably alarmed, the farmer had no alternative, and resolving at all hazards to proceed, he rode slowly up, and "when close to the spot, dashed in the spurs, and set the horse off upon a gallop : but the spectre did not miss its opportunity. As he passed the corner where she was perched, she contrived to drop behind the horseman, and seize him round the waist—a manœuvre which greatly increased the speed of the horse and the terror of the rider ; for the hand of her who sat behind him, when pressed upon his, felt as cold as that of a corpse. At his own house at length he arrived, and bade the servants who came to attend him 'Tak' aff the ghaist !' They took off accordingly a female in white, and the poor farmer himself was conveyed to bed, where he lay struggling for weeks with a strong nervous fever. The female was found to be a maniac, who had been left a widow very suddenly by an affectionate husband, and the nature and cause of her malady induced her, when she could make her escape, to wander to the churchyard, where she sometimes wildly wept over his grave, and sometimes standing on the corner of the churchyard-wall, looked out, and mistook every stranger on horseback for the husband she had lost."

Now it is quite possible that the rapid movements of the horse, or the convulsive struggles of the rider, might have shaken the poor woman off before reaching the ter-

mination of this unpleasant journey. She might have then disappeared ; been confined to an asylum or to a sick-bed, and been never more heard of ; in which case, I do submit, that from the whole circumstances, the farmer would almost have been justified in concluding, that his mysterious companion had been something very different from mere flesh and blood.

Another occurrence, somewhat different in its circumstances, but similar in its tendency, took place some years ago at Plymouth. A club of *literati* belonging to that city, were accustomed to meet in the evenings in a summer-house in a garden. On one occasion they came together as usual, when the president of the evening was known to be alarmingly ill—indeed was reported to be on his death-bed. From a sentiment of respect the chair was left vacant ; and the conversation naturally turned upon the absent gentleman ; when suddenly, “the door opened, and the appearance of the president entered the room. He wore a white wrapper, a nightcap round his brow, and the appearance of his face was that of death itself. He stalked into the room with unusual gravity, took the vacant place of ceremony, lifted the empty glass which stood before him, bowed around, and put it to his lips ; then replaced it on the table, and stalked out of the room as silent as he had entered it. The company remained deeply appalled. At length, after many observations on the strangeness of what they had seen, they resolved to despatch two of their number as ambassadors, to see how it fared with the president, who had thus so strangely appeared among them. They went, and returned with the frightful intelligence, that the friend, after whom they had inquired, was that evening deceased.”

This affair remained a deep mystery, till many years afterwards, a sick-nurse, on her death-bed, sent for one

of the members of the club, who was a medical gentleman ; " to whom she acknowledged, with many expressions of regret, that she had long before attended Mr. ——, naming their former president, and that she felt deep distress of conscience, on account of the manner in which he died. She said, that as his malady was attended by light-headedness, she had been directed to keep a close watch upon him during his illness. Unhappily she slept, and during her sleep the patient had awaked and left the apartment. When, on her own awaking, she found the bed empty and the patient gone, she forthwith hurried out of the house to seek him, and met him in the act of returning. She got him, she said, replaced in bed, but it was only to die there. She added, to convince her hearer of the truth of what she said, that, immediately after the poor gentleman expired, a deputation of two members from the club came to inquire after their president's health, and received for answer that he was already dead."

Now it is manifest, that if the persons concerned in this case had not been men of that philosophical turn of mind, which disposed them to judge and to act cautiously, and rather to believe anything than the actual existence of a ghost ; or, if the sick nurse had died suddenly, and thus been prevented from communicating the *eclaircissement* ; or if, as might have happened, she had resolutely persisted to her dying hour, from a sense of shame, and from a consciousness of dereliction of duty, in concealing what she knew—it is manifest, I say, that in any of these circumstances, this very natural and very conceivable, though mysterious event, would have actually implanted in *many minds* an unwavering belief in apparitions. It could not have been otherwise—the conclusion was irresistible, and the conviction natural. Even the philosophy of these men of science, might have bent beneath the evidence of their

senses ; the strength of their scepticism might have given way ; and the ghastly apparition of their delirious president might have haunted their imaginations, and their very dreams, to the latest hour of their existence.

But these are only two cases. How many, that have never been recorded, have yet happened—cases of a similar character, perhaps still more extraordinary, and *—never explained!* If so, why do we yet wonder, that even rational men have put faith in ghosts ?

CHAPTER VIII.

Spectre-Superstition, continued. 3. Trick and Imposture. 4. Visual Spectra.

IN further accounting for the Spectre-Superstition, we have now to mention,

3. *Trick and imposture.*—There can be no doubt that many venerable apparitions have issued from the work-house of man's own ingenuity. As an idiot in the sunshine can make a shadow, so any man can easily fabricate a ghost. The magic-lanthorn is an excellent ghost-factory. A winding-sheet wrapped round a living man, makes a tolerable spectre in a dark night ; more especially in the neighbourhood of some haunted spot, or scene of recorded murder. Robbers have become ghosts, to be able to pick pockets without perpetrating murder ; and the awe, inspired by their appearance in this guise, has been found a surer and more formidable weapon than the pistol or dagger.

Ghost-scenes got up for amusement, have terminated

seriously and in death. Who has not heard of the case of the German student, who, for a wager with a fellow-student, was watching in the same room with a coffined carcase. At midnight, it rose slowly up like a white phantom, swaddled, as it was, in the sad uniform of the grave. He presented a pistol—it advanced—he fired—the spectre flung back in his face the innocuous bullet! What was the consequence? The apparition was a living, but the student was a dead, man. He survived not the shock, yet nothing was simpler than the deception. His companion had extracted the bullet from his loaded pistol—removed the dead body—borrowed its habiliments—and taken its place in the coffin!

For the truth of the preceding story I cannot vouch, but I will vouch for the *possibility* of the circumstances. The following narrative is much of a similar character: it is, I believe, true; and it shows that not only substantial male ghosts, but even lady-phantoms, can stand pistol-shot; and that too, although the fatal lead has not, as in the case which I have now mentioned, been previously extracted.

The lord of an old castle, on the confines of Hungary, gave a splendid entertainment to a large assemblage of his friends; among whom was a gentleman of well-tried and well-known courage—a French officer of hussars. When the hour came for the company to retire, their noble entertainer informed them, that, large as his house was, he found some difficulty in accommodating them all, and could not do so, unless some gentleman would sleep in a room which had long enjoyed the reputation of being haunted, and on that account had not been occupied; but this, he added, he had no doubt that his friend the Major would be kind enough to do, as they all knew him to be a man far above the influence of such vulgar apprehensions. The Major was proud of the well-merited compliment,

and gladly closed with the proposal—declaring as he retired, that if anything occurred to interrupt his rest, he knew it could be nothing but trick, and *he would make the ghosts pay for it*. Having placed two loaded pistols and a lighted candle on a table at his bed-side, he lay down and was soon asleep. But scarcely had he slept an hour, when he was wakened by the sound of loud singing. He raised his head from the pillow, and saw three ladies at the other end of the long and gloomy chamber, attired in green robes, and uniting their voices in a chorus of most exquisite and solemn melody. The Major listened very coolly for some time, and being fond of music, was much delighted; but finding that he could neither get the ladies to change the tune, nor to exchange a word with him, he at length became angry, and ordered them to retire. To this they paid no attention, and he then gave them five minutes to decide—grasping at the same time one of his pistols. The five minutes expired, and the ladies were still there, and still singing—the same tune. He then solemnly assured them that he would fire, when he had counted twenty:—he did so; and taking cool aim, fired first one pistol, and then the other. The ladies sang on; and the Major was so much overcome, that he was found next day in a state of dangerous illness, which lasted three weeks!

In all this there was nothing unaccountable—nothing but mere trick and illusion. When we look into a common mirror, the image of the reflected object appears behind it; but if the mirror be made concave or hollow, the image of an object placed in a certain position is thrown forward, so as distinctly to appear in the air, like a real object. Jugglers have frequently traversed the country with such mirrors. The image of any object, such as a basket of fruit, is made to appear in the air: the spectator is requested to put forth his hand and take some of the

fruit ; he does so, and immediately the image of a hand grasping a dagger makes a plunge at his breast, and he recoils with dismay.

The lord of this castle had lately got one of these concave mirrors, and the Major was believed to be a very proper person on whom to try its powers. The actual ladies were placed in a side-room, communicating by an open door with the haunted chamber. Their images were thrown forward into that chamber. The ear is easily deceived, as every one has noticed, who has witnessed the feats of a ventriloquist ; and the Major very naturally imagined, that the musical sounds proceeded from the phantoms which he saw. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that his bullets, though well aimed, were quite harmless.*

* If the reader wishes to see all the arts and appliances of human ingenuity, successfully employed to convert an intelligent Prince to a belief in apparitions, &c. let him read the *Ghost-Seer*, by Schiller, a work of fiction, indeed, but characterized by deep thought, fertile invention, forcible language, and sound philosophy. The most marked defect—but one, which may be considered as inherent in the plan of the work—is the excessive and almost incredible amount of elaborate machinery introduced by the mysterious Armenian, in the accomplishment of his supernatural exhibitions. Among other things of that nature, apparitions are created by the magic lanthorn—sympathetic inks are employed, so that the address on the back of a letter becomes visible only at a certain hour—a man, being charged with electricity, is invulnerable to a sword, which no sooner touches him than the arm of the person who wields it is paralysed and recoils—by chymical means, ribbands are made to change colour without any visible cause—a deadly wound is pretended to be cured instantaneously, so as not even to exhibit a scar, the dagger employed having been so formed that the blade retired into the handle, while the blood gushed from a bag concealed beneath the garments—thunder and lightning are imitated—and supernatural voices are uttered through tubes and trumpets, constructed so as to communicate with the Prince's apartment, and terminating in his desk and bed-posts—nay, a beautiful lady is actually raised from the dead—a lady with whom he had fallen deeply in love, and who *appeared to have died and been buried*.

4. *Visual SPECTRA, proceeding from a morbid state of the corporeal functions, operating on the organ of sight.* —That accurate philosophical observer, the late Mr. Wollaston, informs us that, on one occasion while walking along the street, he could only see the half of whatever object he looked on, whether a sign or a man. I have myself met with a gentleman occasionally afflicted in the same manner. But the eye is liable to see too much as well as too little: there is a certain diseased state of this organ, sometimes quite temporary, and sometimes of a more permanent character, which actually causes the person so afflicted to see various *spectra*, or distinct images of forms, which have no real existence—which may, in short, be termed *ghosts*. Before mentioning one or two instances of this kind, I shall endeavour briefly to explain the *rationale* of the phenomenon.

When we *see* any object, such as a house or a man, the image of that house or man is reflected from the object itself upon the *retina*, or net-like membrane, on the back-part of the eye. This membrane communicates with the brain by the optical nerve, of which indeed it is merely an enlargement or expansion; and as the brain is the organ and seat of all our perceptions, it is thus, that the *idea* of the object is immediately transmitted to the mind. When

I may here observe, that magicians and necromancers generally enveloped themselves in the smoke of incense, &c. to render objects indistinct. Like our modern jugglers, they used much mummary and many words to distract attention. Thomas Ady, in a book published in 1656, viz. *A Candle in the Dark against Witches and Witchcraft*, says—“I will speak of one more excelling in the craft than others, that went about in King James his time, who called himself the king’s most excellent Hocus Pocus, because, that at the playing of every trick he used to say,

Hocus pocus tout us talontus
Vade celeriter jubeo;
a dark composure of words to blind the eyes of the beholders.”

the object is withdrawn from the range of our vision, the image of that object passes away from the *retina*, and we see it no longer ; the eye and the mind are then occupied with other images, and other visible objects. But this is not always the case, even when the eye is in a healthy state. If at any time we gaze for some moments on the sun, or any dazzling luminary, the impression of the image on the *retina* is so powerful, that it does not, as in ordinary cases, almost instantaneously pass away : though we look at any other object, or even shut our eyes, we still continue to see the same image, till the deep impression of the too brilliant picture wears gradually off.

But how does it happen that we can at any time conjure into our minds the distinct image of an object which is not present. At this moment I can form the idea of a steamboat : I see it almost as clearly as if the vessel were present in this room—its brilliant and gaudy colouring—the smoke issuing in black volumes from the funnel—the foaming and enraged water which it leaves behind, as it dashes onward with independent speed. Why, I have a mental *picture* before me ! And how is this ? The image of the steamboat, and of the water, cannot surely be depicted on my *retina*, when the objects themselves are not present ! This is doubtful. There are mysteries in this world, which are not dreamt of in every man's philosophy. It is I believe a very recent, and certainly a very astounding, but yet probable doctrine, that the image *is*, in these circumstances, actually depicted on the *retina*, though the object be absent and far distant ! It is explained thus :—As the image of a visible object, when painted on the back of the eye, transmits the impression of that object to the brain, and thus the idea to the mind ; so, by a species of re-action, the idea, being formed in the mind, operates on the brain—that upon the optical nerve—and that upon the *retina*, which is indeed a part of itself—producing in

the *retina*, precisely the same feeling which the actual picture of the object would excite—a feeling, however, less or more distinct, according to the power of imagination, or strength of memory.

Now, it is easy to conceive, that if some vivid image be continually present to the mind, this image may at last imprint itself on the *retina*, so deeply as even to become permanent and indelible; so that, by no force of reasoning, or strong effort of the understanding, or of the will, can the actual appearance of the object be banished from the *mind's eye*. And this is more likely to be the case, if the organ of sight itself be in such a morbid and unhealthy state, as to lose its natural elasticity, and not easily to throw off any image or picture, which has once been impressed upon it from without, or branded upon it from within by the fire of an ardent imagination.*

I shall now mention one or two striking cases, which some of my readers, had they not been prepared to understand them by these preliminary remarks, might not have been able to explain or willing to credit, and might per-

* As mental ideas seem actually to impress upon the *retina* the object present to the mind, so there can be little doubt, that they affect the other senses in the same way, and that, under strong excitement, men have not only imagined that they *saw*, but even that they *heard* and *felt*, objects of terror or of strong desire. In this case likewise, there is, properly speaking, something beyond mere imagination: there is actual hearing and feeling, though no sound is uttered, and no palpable object is present. The imagination is indeed the source, or *primum mobile*, of the delusion; but it operates so powerfully as actually to move the *tympnum*, or excite the nerves of sensation under the skin, precisely in the same manner as an actual sound, or actual collision with a palpable object, would do. There is therefore actual *hearing* and *feeling*, though indeed originating in imagination, and therefore in delusion. To this kind of delusion may be ascribed,

The airy tongues, that syllable men's names,
On shores, on desert sands and wildernesses.

haps have regarded as not less marvellous or supernatural than even the actual appearance of veritable ghosts, and *bona fide* spectres. For the two following cases, both resting on unquestionable authority, I again draw upon Sir Walter Scott's *Letters on Demonology*.

The first is one, in which the visual delusion was temporary and evanescent. The hero of the story was a gentleman of the name of Clifford, an officer in the army, and a man of dauntless and tried courage, though somewhat given to fanaticism. He was a Roman Catholic; and happening to ride one morning about four miles over the country to see his Confessor, he found him dangerously ill: his life, indeed, was despaired of; and during the whole of that day, the Captain, who held his Confessor in high esteem, was in great distress and apprehension about the event. This, of course, kept the image of the absent man continually present to his mind; and in this state, with many painful recollections crowding fast upon him, he was just on the point of retiring to bed, when, to his utter amazement, he beheld in the room the distinct image of his friend, whom, so very lately, he had left in bed in a state of alarming illness. He spoke to the figure, but received no answer. Resolved to push the matter to its utmost limits, he advanced on the phantom; which however, gradually retreated before him till he followed it quite round the bed, when it seemed to sink down, into a sitting posture, in an elbow-chair. The Captain went forward, and deliberately sat down in the lap of the apparition; but he now saw it standing before him. He then rose and coolly undressed himself: the ghost, without troubling itself on that score, stepped into bed before him: Mr. Clifford followed; but he does not appear to have seen more of the spectre.

The next case of similar delusion which I shall mention, was one of a permanent and fatal character. The

medical gentleman, who communicated the story to Sir Walter Scott, was called to attend the illness of a legal gentleman, who had lately stood high in his profession ; and who was sometimes confined to his room, occasionally to his bed, but still at intervals applied himself to business with his usual energy and talent. The symptoms of his malady were a constant depression of spirits, difficulty of digestion, absence of appetite, and slowness of pulse ; and these unfavourable indications seemed to be produced, or at least aggravated, by some secret *mental affliction*, which the patient carefully concealed ; replying, as he always did, very mysteriously and briefly to the doctor's interrogatories. At length, however, he was with much difficulty prevailed upon to make a full revelation of his case ; and when everybody, except the doctor, was removed from the sick room, he made the following discovery of his unhappy condition. He stated that, a year or two previously to that date, he had frequently observed, while sitting at his desk, the presence of a large cat. For some time he supposed it to be a real animal of that species ; but, finding that it often appeared and disappeared in the most mysterious manner, he began at length to suspect the true nature of the case, and to ascribe it to a morbid state of the imagination, and of his visual organs. Happily, however, he had no particular animosity against cats, as some people have, and he was very little incommoded by the vision so long as it retained this particular form. But, by and bye, the cat vanished, and he found himself continually attended by a very polite gentleman-usher dressed in black, who courteously bowed him, with inimitable gravity, into every company. Even this sable apparition, which nobody ever took notice of but himself, and which he well knew to be a phantom of his own brain, did not inconvenience him very much ; and had the vision continued in this second form, he could have endured it

with comparative indifference. But great was his horror, when, in the space of a few months, it assumed the very semblance of *death*, and changed into a horrible, ghastly, and grinning, skeleton. This form it retained ; and, alone or in company, the presence of this abominable intruder —this *constant* monitor of death and of the dark grave, never left him : it was before his eyes—at his side—peeping with its organ-less sockets, and gibbering with its rattling jaws, in his very face. He knew it to be a spectre—a spectre of his own brain ; but he could *not* banish, and he could *not* endure it. It was impossible to live among the living, in the continual presence of *death*. This was his complaint—his curse. He knew he was a dying man—he was wasting away, the victim of an imaginary distemper ; yet how could he desire to live, or how *could* he live, with such a horrible spectre for his inseparable companion.

The doctor at once saw the nature of the case, and trembled for the consequences. In the meantime, however, he had some hope, that, aided by the powerful judgment of the sick man himself, whose intellects were quite unimpaired,* he might try the experiment, however hopeless, of positively reasoning the skeleton out of his diseased imagination. He made the attempt. He inquired at his patient, who was then in bed, whether, at that very moment, the skeleton was present in the room. The lawyer replied, with professional discrimination, that *it seemed so to him*. The doctor asked,—“ In what part of the room ? ” “ There,” said the lawyer, pointing to the foot of his bed, “ it occupies the vacant space between the curtains.” “ Have you the fortitude,” inquired the physician, “ to convince yourself of this delusion, by mak-

* Let not the reader be surprised at this. “ Father Florentino,” says the author of the *Ghost-Seer*, “ thought he was the Holy Ghost, and yet, in every thing else, was a rational and clever man.”

ing an effort to rise, and placing yourself in that spot?" The patient shook his head. "Then will you be convinced of your mistake," said the physician, "if I myself stand in the precise place, which this imaginary object appears to you to occupy?" He planted himself exactly in the spot—"Now," he continued, "do you still see the skeleton?" "Only a part of it," replied the sick man—"I see nothing but the head peeping over your left shoulder." At this piece of information, it is reported that the learned physician himself was considerably alarmed, and turned instantly round with a very uncomfortable movement. But why proceed farther with these details? The result of this case was melancholy. Nothing could dispel the illusion, though the patient knew it to be nothing more. He sank under it—gradually wasting away; till death, not in mere vision, but in stern yet welcome reality, came to his relief.

I might mention many such cases, equally striking and equally true, related by the same author, and by others;—that of M. Gleditsch, of the Academy of Sciences in Berlin, who saw the figure of his late colleague Maupertuis, after the news of that illustrious man's death had been publicly announced;—that of Nicolai, the celebrated bookseller of Berlin, who, having fallen into depressed spirits, and being of a plethoric habit of body, had his rooms continually crowded with imaginary visitors, moving, acting, and even speaking: he knew the multitudinous vision to be illusory, and succeeded in ejecting the whole company from his apartments by copious bleeding and by the use of medicine;—that of a gentleman of rank residing in Edinburgh, who imagined that regularly and daily, precisely at the hour of six o'clock, when he had just finished dinner, his dining-room door flew wide open, an old withered hag rushed in with a furious countenance, and muttering wrath and execration, knocked him to the

ground with her staff. He consulted the celebrated Dr. Gregory, who requested to dine with him; and having witnessed, not the old hag herself, but the effects of her stroke, found the illusion to proceed from periodical shocks of the nature of apoplexy, happening regularly at that hour. The doctor succeeded, by blood-letting and other remedies, in disenchanting his patient. The hag was a mere spectre of the imagination, precisely analogous to those terrific forms, which the oppressive and suffocating sensations of nightmare conjure into visionary existence, to account, as it were, for the intolerable pressure and agony which we experience in such cases. These, and many similar *facts*, might be stated at length; but the limits appropriated to this Treatise forbid me to enlarge; and I shall now conclude this chapter, with a few reflections on the two instances of spectral illusion, which I have given more in detail.

The skeleton-phantom was, as the reader will perceive, of a permanent character; and may easily account for those numerous cases, in which murderers and evil-doers have supposed themselves to be continually haunted by the ghastly phantoms of their unhappy victims. The play of *Macbeth* gives a powerful imaginary exhibition of this frequent phenomenon. On the same principle, we may partially account for those familiar spirits, and good genii, whom some men have supposed to be their constant attendants.

But a case, in which the illusion is of a permanent character, is not so apt to mislead, as those which, like the ghost of Mr. Clifford's father-confessor, are temporary and evanescent. In the former case, time and opportunity are given for the exercise of reason, inquiry, and calm reflection; in the latter, in proportion as the apparition is more fleeting, the impression is more deep and dangerous. It remains unaccountable and unexplained, because it does

not remain to be examined. It vanishes as it came—in mystery ; and there is no remedy but reason—for the vision cannot be recalled.

Hence, doubtless, an incredible multitude of spectres and spirits, amazing ghosts and inexplicable ghost-stories. Captain Clifford's Confessor happily recovered ; but had he been actually a dead man at the time when this singular apparition became visible to that gentleman, the latter could hardly have avoided entertaining the belief, that *it was really his ghost*. Now, we can have no doubt, that many such cases occurred in the dark ages. The few which I have mentioned are quite modern ; but if these, and a multitude of others, are known to have occurred in our own day and generation, how many, equally astonishing, must have happened, from the simple operation of the same natural causes, in the course of centuries ! And when such a case actually *did happen* in the times of our fathers—it may be, to a man distinguished for intelligence and integrity—I do maintain, that with *their* limited knowledge of the natural mysteries of the human organism, they could not, in the exercise of sound reason, arrive at any other conclusion than that these *spectra* were *spectres*. The conclusion was not only excusable—it was inevitable. Their ignorance actually and irresistibly coerced them into this error. Reasoning—and reasoning justly—on their own circumscribed *data*, they were driven into superstition. One case of a grinning skeleton, or one well-authenticated case of an old hag with a staff, must have made many converts to the spectre-creed. What could be expected, even from the exercise of sound reason, struggling in the chains of ignorance, when we know that multitudes of such cases must have actually occurred ? How many miserable victims have been bereft of judgment, or have pined to death, in the crushing grasp of an imaginary phantom, which they knew not to be imaginary !

CHAPTER IX.

Application of the principles laid down to some remarkable cases.
—The External Evidences of Christianity superior to this ordeal.
—Limits of a rational incredulity on the subject of supernatural agency.—Concluding inferences.

I HAVE thus endeavoured, in the preceding chapters, to furnish what I conceive to be the best of remedies for one of the greatest of evils—a clear, methodical, and concise elucidation of those principles, which seem to account in a satisfactory manner for the various forms of *superstitious belief*, without recognizing, as an admissible or necessary element, the slightest admixture of the *supernatural*. The view which I have given of this subject, has been merely an outline; but brief and imperfect as that outline has been, I trust that the reader will be able to explain, on one or more of the above-stated principles, most of the apparently supernatural cases which have come to his knowledge.

It is not to be denied, that there are cases on record, which are calculated to stagger the most inveterate scepticism. That of Lord Tyrone and Lady Beresford, *if true*, is quite inexplicable on any known principles. To convince us however, that his lordship did actually, according to his solemn compact, return to this world, would require evidence of a yet more decisive character than appears to have been hitherto advanced. The case of Lord Lyttleton, who is said to have predicted the precise hour of his death, has been otherwise stated on very good authority, and certainly with more verisimilitude, in terms which reduce it to a very common-place occurrence: in short, according to this improved version, it resolves itself

into nothing. If Brutus *did indeed* see the apparition of that illustrious kinsman, whom, in the ardour of his patriotism, he had slain, summoning him to meet him at Philippi, there seems to be nothing unaccountable, or even very extraordinary, in the circumstance. It was natural for Brutus to see *this phantom* in his dreams ; and a man so completely conversant as he was with military affairs, might easily conjecture, that Philippi would be the point at which the hostile armies would come into collision. Philippi was at least one among several probable places, and *coincidence* may explain the rest. The case of Corder and Maria Marten, which attracted so much public attention some years ago, is certainly one of the most striking, as it is one of the best authenticated cases on record. It will be recollected, that the murder of the above-named young woman was providentially discovered by a dream of her mother. On this subject a writer has justly observed, that as strong suspicions of foul play were entertained, and as the barn-door was the place at which Corder and the young woman were last seen together, it was perfectly natural for the anxious mother to dream that her daughter had been deprived of life, and that her mangled remains were buried in the barn.

And why not explain, on the same principle, those modern cases of a seemingly miraculous character, which happen to be connected with religion, or with men of piety ? Must every thing wonderful, *which happens to be so connected*, be deemed a miracle ? For my own part, I think not ; and I am strongly disposed to attribute to mere coincidence one or two apparent *judgments* mentioned in the Auto-biography of Dr. Adam Clarke. We are not bound to believe, that there was anything miraculous or supernatural in Colonel Gardiner's vision. In these days, the working of the Spirit, in the conversion of sinners, seems generally to operate through the agency of natural

causes.* The numerous miracles recorded in the *Scots Worthies* are beneath notice—they are positively absurd ; and the reading of such silly nonsense, in a book associated with religion, is calculated only to undermine our faith, and to work evil.

Let it not be thought, that in making these remarks, I have any intention to treat lightly the efficacy of prayer, or to cast a shadow of suspicion on the miracles or doctrines of the Bible. It were folly to tamper with one's own convictions, and with the firm foundation of one's own hopes. But I again state, what I have previously affirmed, that I look on all modern miracles—even on those of the religious world—as essentially distinct from the miracles recorded in the Sacred Volume. The latter will pass with impunity—nay, I believe, with triumph—through the most searching ordeal. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, is at once a prophecy and a miracle. And moreover, it is not on such evidence alone, that the beautiful and now venerable structure of Christianity rests : it rests, if I may so speak, upon itself—upon its own sublimity and completeness.†

One thing is certain—that TRUTH will stand, *even if Religion should not* ; but confidently do I trust, that the farther we investigate the former, the deeper will our faith strike its roots into the latter ; and that truth will always be found to be the main pillar of religion. For my own part, I should rather have no Religion at all, than stupidly *profess a Religion* which shrunk from inquiry,

* Mr. Newnham mentions the case of a lady, labouring under nervous affection, who saw, or believed that she saw, in her bedroom, a most distinct vision, exceedingly similar to that which appeared to the Colonel.

† The canon of Revelation is so complete, that a woe is actually denounced against those who would add to it. Modern miracles are therefore superfluous.

and, like an evil-doer, preferred to the bold light of day, that darkness, which in all ages has been the foster-mother —the *alma mater*, of Superstition.

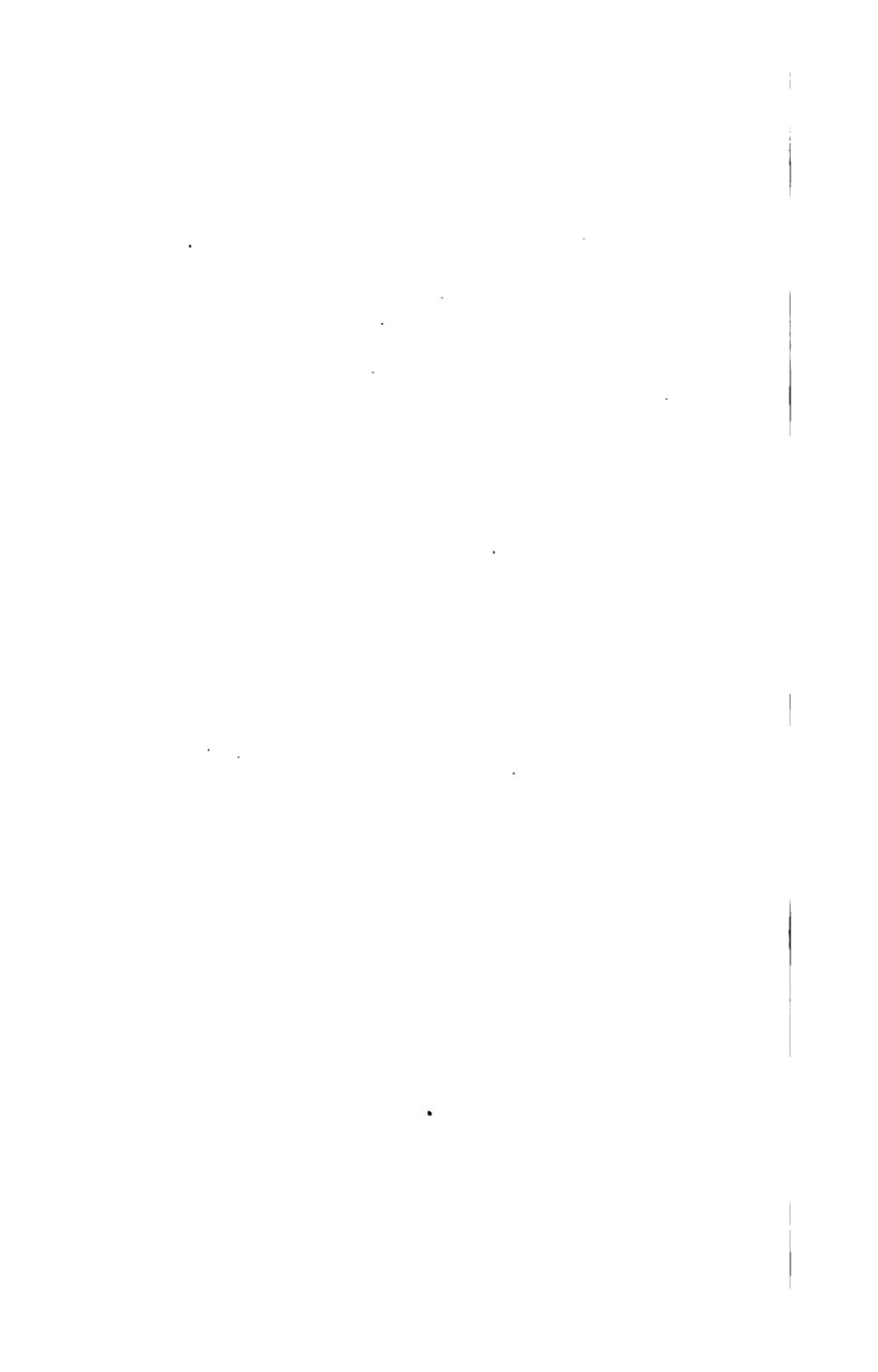
But apart from Religious considerations—*what is our conclusion?* Are we to affirm in the most positive and sweeping manner, that nothing whatever of a supernatural character has happened since the gospel-age. For my own part, I shrink from such a bold position. I think we are warranted in going no farther than simply to maintain, that *we have not yet been informed of one well-authenticated case*. Let us ever speak cautiously on the subject of *possibilities*. It is certainly true, that, in one sense of the expression, we do actually live in an age of miracles. The mighty achievements of modern science, and even the astonishing phenomena of animal magnetism—phenomena now at length too well attested to admit of being treated any longer with contemptuous levity—seem to afford a very strong presumption, that agencies are operating around us, which may perhaps occasionally break forth in unlooked-for developments. Even at this moment the scientific world is engaged with successful ardour in the great work of discovery; and ever and anon there issues, from the closet or from the laboratory, some marvellous novelty, which nothing but positive demonstration would induce us to believe; and which, unless thus demonstrated, would certainly appear to us not less incredible than even *supernatural results*. The mind, which has been disciplined in this school of discovery, is prepared to believe *much*, and to admit that the element of the *marvellous*, though certainly calculated to excite suspicion, is by no means an infallible evidence of untruth.

The following are the two general inferences with which I conclude:—

I. *That the various objects of superstitious belief, can be satisfactorily accounted for on natural principles.*

II. That the different forms of superstition, have been the natural and necessary consequences of the state of knowledge, at the periods at which they existed.

LONDON, March 6th, 1845.

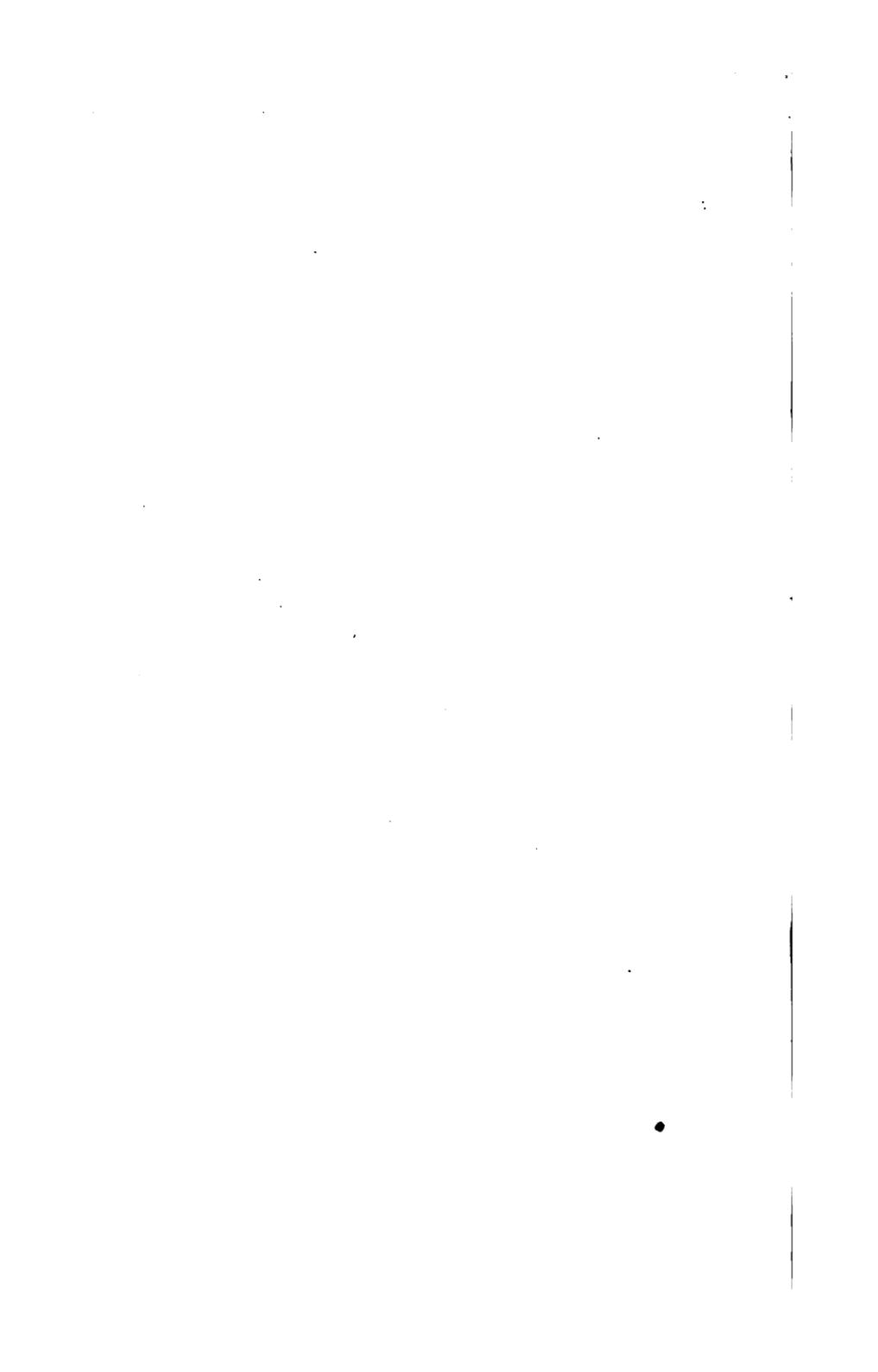


P A R T II.

THE HOLOCAUST;
OR, THE WITCH OF MONZIE:
A P O E M,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE CRUELTIES OF SUPERSTITION,
AND DESCRIPTIVE OF
THE BURNING OF KATE MNIVEN,
THE WITCH OF MONZIE,
AND ONE OF THE LAST VICTIMS OF FIRE AND FAGGOT IN
SCOTLAND.

And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.—*Isaiah, viii. 19, 20.*



PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Historical Sketch of the Witch Persecution.—Kate's Biography.—
Rob Roy a contemporary.—Description of Monzie.

THE First Part of the following Poem requires no comment, except what the reader will find in the Notes. It is merely a general delineation of perhaps the most brutal and appalling picture, which the earlier history of this world exhibits.

Book the Second is a short leaf from what may be termed a modern continuation of the same bloody record. Witch-burnings were the Human Sacrifices of more recent times; and the extent to which the horrible practice was carried is almost incredible.

Strangely enough, the birth of this modern atrocity seems to have been almost coeval with the invention of printing. The first Press which was erected in England, was that which was established in the Almonry of Westminster, in the year 1471. The consequence of this invention was a rapid improvement in science, literature, and common-sense. The Reformation which burst forth in Germany, in the earlier part of the next century, was one of its first fruits. Yet, strange to say, in the year

1484, when the midnight of modern history had passed over, and the morning had begun to dawn, the Witch persecution sprang into vigorous existence and spread rapidly. The death-fires of holy heretics alone illuminated the unmitigated darkness of the darkest ages: other flames were now kindled, and even the fathers of the blessed Reformation added fuel to these flames.*

During the pontificate of Innocent VIII. who is entitled to the credit of fulminating the first stringent bull against Witchcraft, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, or the Hammer for Witches, was ushered into the world. Printing gave it wings, and it went forth, and many a mad and miserable old woman it dragged from humble harmless obscurity, and consigned to the most horrible of deaths. This elaborate book pretended to point out the infallible marks of a witch, the most proper method of trial, and the most successful means of eliciting by torture an unreserved confession. It was certainly a Hammer constructed on a wrong principle: it created more witchcraft than it demolished; and the crime, or at least convictions for the crime, increased and multiplied.

It appears that Alexander VI. who succeeded Innocent, and Leo. X. who was the next in office, plied the Hammer with indefatigable zeal, but with no success. The race of witches multiplied beneath every stroke; although such was the holy rage of persecution, that 500 were executed in Geneva in three months; and in the diocese of Como, not less than 1,000 in the space of a

* During the earlier centuries of the middle ages, little was known of witchcraft. The crime of magic, when it did occur, was leniently punished. For instance, the Council of Aucyra (314) ordained the whole punishment of witches to consist in expulsion from the Christian community. The Visigoths punished them with stripes; and Charlemagne, by advice of his bishops, confined them in prison, until such time as they should sincerely repent.—*Preface to the Amber-Witch.*

year, and 500 *per annum* for some time after. In France, about the year 1520, the number who perished is reported to have been incredible.

As previously stated, the blessed Reformation—blessed in its general character—was death to the Witches; and, accordingly, we read that in Germany alone, from the date of Innocent's bull to the final suppression of the Witch-persecution, the number of victims could not have been less than 100,000. In Lindheim, from 1660 to 1664, one-twentieth of the population—a tolerable per centage—is said to have been consumed.

In England, during the reign of the Long Parliament alone, 3,000 persons were executed for the crime of witchcraft. Even the celebrated Sir Matthew Hale was an actor in this tragedy. The mania began at last to abate, yet not until a later period than the march of improvement in England might have led us to expect; for “in 1716, a Mrs. Hicks and her daughter aged nine, were hanged at Huntingdon for selling their souls to the devil, and raising a storm by pulling off their stockings, and making a lather of soap.” This memorable and crowning atrocity, was the last of the kind perpetrated in England; and the whole number of *supposed* witches, who perished in that country, is estimated at 30,000.

Scotland was exempt from this curse till the period of the Reformation, but had her share of it thereafter. In 1563, an act of Parliament was passed against witches and consulters with witches. In the reign of James VI. witchcraft became the engrossing topic of the day, and was the ordinary accusation resorted to, when one individual wished to ruin another. The first case on record of a witch-execution in Scotland, took place in 1572. The Church, to her shame be it spoken, took an active and leading share in the hot persecution which followed. “The scene darkens”—says Mr. Combe (from whose work on

The Constitution of Man these *numerical* details are taken)—“towards the close of the reign of Charles I. with the increasing dominion of the Puritans. In 1640, the General Assembly passed an act that all ministers should take particular note of witches and charmers, and that the commissioners should recommend to the supreme judicature the unsparing application of the laws against them. In 1643, after setting forth the increase of the crime, they recommended the granting of a standing commission from the Privy Council or Justiciary, to ‘any understanding gentlemen or magistrates,’ to apprehend, try, and execute justice against delinquents. By the urgency of the General Assembly, who resumed the subject in 1644, 1645, and 1649, an act of Parliament was passed in the last-named year, confirming and extending the statute of Queen Mary, passed in 1563. As was to be expected, convictions, which had been fewer since James’s time, increase, and the cases are more horrible. Thirty trials appear on the record between 1649 and 1660, in which there seems to have been only one acquittal; while, at one western circuit, in 1659, seventeen persons were convicted and burnt for the imputed crime. Numerous, however, as are the cases on the records of Justiciary, these afford a most inadequate idea of the extent to which this pest prevailed over the country; for the Privy Council was in the habit of granting commissions to resident gentlemen and ministers, to examine, and afterwards to try and execute, witches, all over Scotland; and so numerous were these commissions, that one author expresses his astonishment at the number found on the registers. Under these commissions multitudes were burnt in every part of the kingdom.

“ It is matter of history, that in matters of this kind the clergy displayed the most intemperate zeal. It was before them that the poor wretches were first brought for

examination—in most cases after a preparatory course of solitary confinement, cold, famine, want of sleep, or actual torture. On some occasions the clergy themselves actually performed the part of the prickers, and inserted long pins into the flesh of the witches, in order to try their sensibility; and, in all cases, they laboured with the most persevering investigations to obtain from the accused a confession which might afterwards be used against them on their trial, and which, in more than one instance, formed, although retracted, the sole evidence on which the conviction took place.

“ After 1662 the violence of the mania in Scotland began to decline; and the last execution took place at Dornoch in 1722. The statutes were finally repealed in 1735.

“ So little light”—continues the same author—“ did the Bible afford regarding the atrocity of the proceedings against witches, that the Secession Church of Scotland, comprising many intelligent clergymen and a large number of the most serious and religious of the people, complained, in their annual confession of personal and national sins (printed in an act of their Associate Presbytery at Edinburgh in 1743), of the ‘penal statutes against witches having been repealed by Parliament, *contrary to the express law of God.*’ This defection is classed by Dr. John Brown of Haddington, one of the great leaders of the Secession Church, about the middle and end of last century, among ‘the practical backslidings from the once attained to and covenanted work of reformation, which have happened in the preceding and present age, as abuses of the singular favours of God.’ ”*

Such is a brief record of that vile persecution, of which the heroine of the following Poem was one of the last

* Combe on *The Constit. of Man.* Cap. ix.

victims. Of the actual history of this woman (who was probably unsound in her intellects) we know little: our chief authority is tradition, and tradition in these days is less faithful and less accurate than it was of yore. I cannot say that I very much deplore this circumstance on the present occasion; as my object in these pages is not to present the public with a well-connected and amusing story, but to exhibit one of the most striking features in the recent history of our country. At the same time, to satisfy the curiosity of the local reader, I shall mention the little which I have been able to gather, in connection with Kate's history, from one or two manuscripts which I have seen.

Her name is generally pronounced M'Niven, but undoubtedly Nicniven (or the daughter of Niven) was her real name; although the reader is not to confound poor Kate with the celebrated NICNIVEN, the "Hecate of the Celts"—an awful and mysterious being, whom that wildly imaginative people worshipped as the goddess of tempests. Kate was a witch, and no goddess; and, more than this—she was a *nurse* in the family of Inchbrakie. Her foster-son was Patrick, afterwards Laird of Inchbrakie, who, from his sombre complexion, was honoured with the *soubriquet* of "Black Pate." Kate's nursing of this sable youth seems to have been none of the kindest; for, being impressed with a presentiment that one day or other he would prove the means of her death, she is said to have frequently attempted to destroy him by poison.

In the meantime she was a witch, and gave conclusive proofs of it. One of these was memorable. The Laird of Inchbrakie (Pate's father) rode over to Dunning to attend some public meeting, and according to the usage of the times took his knife and fork in his pocket. While dining at that place, he was annoyed by a bee which buzzed about his ears: he laid down his knife and fork

for a moment to make use of his hands in getting rid of the intruder: the bee soon left him and flew out by the window: he returned to table; but his knife and fork were gone, and, though all the company were strictly searched, the articles (at that time rare and precious) could not be found. When the Laird returned to Inchbrakie he mentioned his misfortune, and immediately the old nurse produced his identical knife and fork.

Kate's gloomy presentiment was at last realized, and it happened on this wise. There was an aged thorn at Dunning, with which it would appear that her fate was mysteriously connected. This thorn was destroyed in some tumult, and, before it was possible that news of the event could have reached Inchbrakie, the witch suddenly exclaimed,—“Alas, the thorn's felled, and I'm undone!” Her foster-son, who was present, and on whom the knife-and-fork affair had not been lost, was at once confirmed in his suspicions, and had Kate taken up for a witch.

Tradition says there was much difficulty in seizing the accused; and that, besides being a witch, she was fleet of foot. At length, however, she was lodged in “durance vile.” Who were her judges I know not—probably some of the *understanding gentlemen, magistrates, and ministers of the neighbourhood*: among the rest William Moray, at that time Laird of Abercairney, a gentleman highly esteemed by all classes, but who had afterwards the misfortune to have his neck broken when returning from a dinner-party at Methven Castle, in a carriage drawn by four spirited horses; Sir Patrick Murray of Ochtertyre; the Laird of Monzie; the Laird and Minister of Crieff; Mr. Bowie, Minister of Monzie; Mr. Hepburn of Fowlis; and a few more. What were the precise points of evidence is equally a mystery: I do wish they were on record: probably the villainous bee at Dunning and the unfortunate thorn affair, were the weightiest charges. In the

meantime, the poor woman was doubtless subjected to hardships and privations, which may have deprived her of the last flickerings of reason, or perhaps have made her glad to confess anything. At all events Kate was condemned.

When brought to the stake, she appears to have been treated with no indulgence. The Minister of Monzie and the other gentlemen present, are said to have been “bitter against her.” The Laird of Inchbrakie—the same whose knife and fork she had purloined at Dunning—was the only influential person who dared, at the eleventh hour, to interpose in her behalf; and Kate, in the gratitude of her heart, bit off (for her hands were bound) a bead from her necklace, and spitting it towards her intercessor, declared, that so long as the house of Inchbrakie should preserve that *charm*, it would never fail of a direct heir, or lose the patrimonial property—adding, that out of the King’s Craig would come what would do them all good. She likewise predicted, that so long as the Shaggie (a neighbouring stream) should continue to run in its present course, there should not be a lineal descendant to the house of Monzie, nor should the ministers of that Parish ever prosper.

Other accounts make no mention of the necklace, but merely affirm that she spat out of her mouth a precious stone. This stone, which is said to be an uncut sapphire, has been set in a ring, which is carefully preserved in the Inchbrakie family to this day. The late Laird attached so much value to the precious *relique*, that in showing it to a friend, he was never known to let it out of his hand, except on one occasion to a young lady, an especial favourite, and his future daughter-in-law.

A circumstance happened in the history of that charmed family, which vastly increased the mysterious importance of the Witch-legacy. The lands of Inchbrakie had been

pledged in wadset—the day was close at hand, when either the money was to be paid or the lands to be lost—the Laird was in extremities—a friend advised him to apply to the Bank of Strathearn (meaning the Balgowan family, which was called so at that time)—he did apply and obtained the money—the servant who received it to carry home, thrust it into a cloak-bag, and placed it on his horse in one of the Balgowan stables—the low stable-door would hardly permit the horse and bag to get out; but the servant pushed the latter through, exclaiming when he had done so, that the Witch's prophecy was now fulfilled, for the stable was built out of the King's Craig.

So much for Kate's history as a witch, and her veracity as a prophetess. The day of her burning was doubtless a great and memorable day in the parish of Monzie, and in the whole country round. I do not believe that the *gathering* described in the following Poem is in any degree exaggerated.

That this event happened in the spring of the year 1715, the year of the memorable rebellion, is by no means improbable, and is here taken for granted. We have seen that, even in England, Mrs. Hicks and her daughter were executed one year later, and that the last transaction of the kind in Scotland took place at Dornoch in the year 1722. These are circumstances which suggest one or two interesting reflections, connected with the state of society and of the country at that period.

In the first place, is it not matter of amazement, that very little more than a century has yet elapsed, since even in our own country such scenes were exhibited, and persons condemned to a most cruel death on such frivolous and absurd charges?

In the second place, is it not equally surprising, that almost in the same district of country in which our unfortunate heroine was committed to the flames, and even at

the same late period in otr national history, an avowed robber on a large scale—an outlaw—on whose head a price was set, did actually, in daring defiance of the civil power, continue his predatory incursions for well-nigh half a century. The case of

“Robin Hood and his merry men all”

is not for a moment to be compared with that of Rob Roy. The former was born about the middle of the twelfth century; the latter was present at the battle of Sheriffmuir, and was performing his exploits in the age of newspapers, and in defiance of newspaper advertisements. Can the reader believe, that the wild forests of Atholl (where lately our beloved Queen found a quiet asylum), the braes of Balquhidder, and the romantic banks of Lochearn, were the favourite and secure haunts of a leader of banditti, who eluded and even mocked the police, defied the military, and laid the whole neighbouring country under heavy exactions during a succession of many years, and yet at length died on his own bed at a good old age:—Can the reader believe that all this took place, and that a woman was burned for the imputed crime of witchcraft, not many miles from The Fair City, even so recently as in the bright Augustan age of English literature, when Addison, Defoe, Sir Isaac Newton, Pope, and Swift, were enriching with their immortal contributions the intellectual treasury of our country? How rapidly society has advanced in this brief interval!

I shall conclude these prefatory remarks with a short *local* description.

The Parish of Monzie (pron. Mon-ee) lies sixteen miles west from Perth, and possesses, in more than an average proportion, all the picturesque attractions of those mongrel-districts, in which Highland and Lowland scenery embrace and mingle. It is a large irregular parish, chiefly Highland, extending to the north and through the Small

Glen, among the wild Grampians, and approaching with its western extremity almost to Crieff; from which the church and hamlet of Monzie are separated only by the lofty Knock—that noble altar of nature's own rearing, which was doomed, alas, when poor Kate was burned, to be polluted by a “sacrifice of devils.”

The village or Kirktown of Monzie is a small agglomeration of lowly cottages, possessing very humble claims to architectural elegance. It can now boast one slated house—only one—although the slate quarry of Glenalmond is certainly at no great distance. Even this *one*, however, is a proof that the world is progressing. Generally, or rather universally, the cottages in the village and throughout the parish are mere hovels, scantily lighted, and so miserably ventilated as altogether to resemble the Cimmerian regions. It is singular that notwithstanding of these disadvantages, instances of extreme longevity are numerous. This, however, is attributable to the external climate, and certainly not to the internal atmosphere of these gloomy abodes. In some of the cottages it is actually necessary to pass through the “byre” or cowhouse to gain access to the interior. It is high time that Scotland from north to south should wipe off this disgrace.

The inhabitants of the village may amount to about 100 in round numbers. They are chiefly *pendiclers*—each family cultivating about an acre of ground, the rent of which and of their miserable hovels they earn by out-of-door labour. The *acres*, as they are called, were once on the site of the present glebe, which is a fertile and tractable piece of ground sloping down to the road; but they are now removed farther up; and as harvest approaches they present a motley enough appearance.

The venerable yews, which screen the kirk-yard on its western side, extend their dark green masses of pine-like foliage over the high road which passes the church, and

very solemn and imposing appearance, strikingly not only with the kirk and kirk-yard, but with the Highland and majestic grandeur of the whole scene. At the time to which the narrative refers, the lawn or park beyond the manse (and almost adjoining to this spot), which is now vulgarly termed "the Green," was planted, or at least bounded, by a grove of birch. Emerging from the deep shade of the umbrageous yews, which, interlacing with lofty firs, almost overhang the manse-shrubbery on the opposite side, the road crosses the Shaggie at "Kate M'Niven's gate;" and here the arch of the former bridge is still standing, mantled with venerable ivy, and crowned with a handsome and thriving specimen of the silver fir, which is reflected like a warrior's plume in the deep and clear pool beneath. Immediately above, and proudly ascending with his rugged peak into the clear sky, appears Kap-na-claine, overlooking, like a watchful sentinel, the whole scene, and forming decidedly the boldest feature on the northern side of the landscape.*

Standing on the bridge, and looking down the Shaggie, which here flows nearly due west, you have in front, a little to the left, M'Niven's antique doorway, divided only by a beechen hedge from the back part of the manse, which is almost concealed by a tall clump of overhanging trees. Passing through the witch's doorway, and emerg-

* These several objects, including the falls of the Shaggie, have been gracefully grouped together by a resident bard, in a short poem which I love and admire for its graphic simplicity, and of which I wish that I could furnish the reader with more than the following short specimen:—

The mountain-rock, the high cascade,
The varied tints of light and shade,
The low-roof'd cottage in the hill,
The modest church, the hamlet still,
The arches twain that span the river,
 &c. &c. &c. &c.

ing from the shade of the trees which occupy the steep declivity between the manse and the Shaggie, you find yourself standing on "the Green," at the corner of the manse-garden, which is only surrounded by a low thorn-hedge and neat palisade, though legally entitled to the sturdier fence of a stone-wall. From this point, the view to the south and south-west is decidedly striking and magnificent. Whether illumined by the full blaze of a summer-morn, or revealed more faintly by the mellow light of a broad harvest-moon, it is a scene of inexpressible beauty. On the right hand is the clear mountain-stream, fresh from its cool fountains on the mossy hill, and now tamed into a murmuring and sweet rivulet, as it glances along through the green parks till lost among the stately trees, which lift up their graceful masses of variegated foliage to screen the elegant and tall mansion, which gives or owes its name to the parish. Across the Shaggie, at no great distance to the right, are the Broomie-knowes, exhibiting on this side a steep glacis, surmounted by a grove of beech running almost parallel to the stream, and supporting on its elevated summits a vociferous rookery. Beyond this you descry the brown hills, variegated here and there by a darker shade, or by a tint of green, and studded with flocks.

But the principal and prominent feature of this bold landscape is the huge Knock, which rises abruptly in front beyond the house of Monzie, emerging like a mountain-island from the woody vale, and feathered all over to its lofty summit with the larch and spruce. It is a noble isolated mass, separating the large village of Crieff from this sequestered scene, and, like a *lion couchant*, reposing at the entrance of a wide pass, which leads from the rich vale of Strathearn into the depths of the Highlands. Not far from the summit of this shapely pile, and very considerably to the left, at the steepest part, where it al-

most overhangs its base, you descry with some difficulty a rocky recess, which is still pointed out as the precise spot where the witch was burned. It is certainly a spot from which the blazing faggots would communicate the tidings of her death to many neighbouring hills.

At the other extremity of the Knock, and rather to your right, its sloping outline is suddenly intersected by that of Turlem, a fainter and more distant object, in the form of a rounded or flattened cone, which completes this compact scene by connecting the northern extremity of the Knock with the dark rampart of mountain which shuts in the landscape on the right. Precisely at that point where Turlem and the Knock intersect, the sun, viewed from this spot, sinks beneath the horizon on the shortest day.

First, Moloch, horrid king, besmear'd with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard, that passed through fire
To his grim idol.

Parad. Lost. B. I.

Zeal then, not charity, became the guide,
And hell was built on spite, and heaven on pride.
Then sacred seem'd th' aetherial vault no more;
Altars grew marble then, and reek'd with gore:
Then first the flamen tasted living food:
Next his grim idol smear'd with human blood:
With heaven's own thunders shook the world below,
And play'd the God an engine on his foe.

Pope's Essay on Man.

THE HOLOCAUST;
OR,
THE WITCH OF MONZIE.

BOOK FIRST.

CONSECRATED ATROCITIES.

I.

More horrid than the prodigies she rears
In her own fancy, and engenders there,
To scare her very self with idle fears,
And freeze her craven votaries with despair ;
Blacker than Nox and Erebus, though blent
Into one two-fold spectre of affright ;
Or those dark clouds, which in the firmament
Eclipsed all Egypt with a triple night ;
Yea, darker than the scowl of midnight storms,
Is Superstition in her myriad forms.

II.

There is a torch within the human soul, [doubt :
 Which glows and burns through darkness and through
 Though tempests beat, and gloomy vapours roll,
 And fiends combine to blow the meteor out—
 Still—still it burns, and sheds its cheerful rays,
 So long as fed with the pure oil of Heaven ;
 But let in Falsehood, and the sickly blaze
 Droops and expires, as if a power were given
 To Superstition's breath to quench outright
 All but infernal or funereal light.

III.

That light she fosters—urging with her breath
 The Suttee's blaze—the hot, remorseless fire, (1)
 'Mid which the widow's shriek is heard in death,
 And living corpses smoulder on the pyre—
 Accursed burnt-offerings ! madly given
 With the same altar which consumes their bones—
 Altar and victim blazing up to Heaven,
 And blending their black ashes on the stones ;
 Till life is death, and the devouring flame
 Has spent its fury on the quivering frame !

IV.

Inexplicable madness ! Can it be
 That yonder multitude, descried afar,
 Rolling dark onward like a living sea,
 And dragging with them the stupendous car
 Of horrid Juggernaut, whose votaries crowd
 To stoop and die beneath the massive wheels—
 Kissing them as they turn—while long and loud
 The maniac shout of approbation peals—
 Oh, can it be that worshipper or priest
 Is raised one step above the soulless beast ?

V.

The priests in harness ! while Orissa's coast
Groans with the weight of the incumbent load !
Ah, well may Superstition proudly boast,
And, mocking Reason, call herself a God !
Since *rational Man*, with faculties divine,
And energies to match with *more than man*,
Can thus descend to worship at a shrine,
Whose crimson shadow covers Hindostan
With human gore ; and which, instead of hymns,
Is filled with groans and mutilated limbs !

VI.

Revolting sight ! I turn to other climes
To seek for *MAN* ; but whither shall I go,
Where Superstition's breath, in bygone times,
Has not prevailed to blast and overthrow
Reason's fair temple—rivetting her chains
On liberty and life ; and squatting down,
Like the vile toad, on Nature's loveliest plains ;
Or sitting for a time, with snaky crown,
Monarch and mistress of the human soul,
From Himmalayah's heights to either pole !

VII.

Yes, she hath left the impress of her foot
On every land, for she hath wandered far ;
And, like pernicious weeds, hath taken root
On every soil where human beings are.
Shew me the coast where man hath never felt (2)
The withering influence of her evil eye !
Shew me the clime where man hath never knelt
As this infernal Deity passed by !
Shew me that land which boasts one sacred flood,
That ne'er was stained with sacrificial blood !

VIII.

And blood of human victims ! streaming forth,
Not in the generous recklessness of strife,
When, like the magnet veering to the north,
The spear-point turns towards the fount of life—
And barbed arrows, like the vulture, dart,
Drawn onward by a strange instinctive power,
Till each stands quivering in a throbbing heart,
As if it wriggled inward to devour
Most greedily the life, or to convulse
The dying moments of the ebbing pulse.

IX.

But, ah ! not only on the field of strife
Has the parched soil drunk in the crimson flood ;
Another Demon, too, can wield the knife—
Harder of heart, though colder far of blood,
Than fiery Mars ; and therefore more abhorred,
Since more deliberate in her cruel guilt ;
For, when the warrior has unsheathed his sword,
And sheathed it yet again up to the hilt
In his foe's breast, his blood is boiling high,
And wild excitement flashes in his eye.

X.

See, in the depths of yon Sarmatian wood, (3)
Where every tree is stained with human gore,
And therefore reverenced !—an altar rude,
Of unhewn stones, is consecrate to Thor ;
And there the naked victim, stretched as dead,
With his face heavenward, and limbs exposed,
Waiting his doom in agony and dread,
With palpitating heart and eyes unclosed,
Gazes on Heaven from the lap of earth,
And curses the sad hour which gave him birth.

XI.

But, mark!—Advancing from the crowd around,
O'er whom the forest flings its reverend shade,
A druid comes; and to his robe is bound
A sacred scabbard—he unsheathes the blade—
Leans o'er the fettered victim; while the mob
Press in to glut their eyes upon the deed—
Pauses a space, as if he would not rob
The victim of one pang ere yet he bleed—
Then, down upon his breast, with giant-force,
He swings the gashing sword, and smites—the corpse.

XII.

Not yet a corpse! for see, upon the ground
He writhes and struggles—gasping wide for breath—
Clutches the altar—howls with doleful sound—
And, rolling wildly, supplicates for death!
But that they grant him not; for, cold and stern,
The priests do anxiously observe his throes,
Not in compassion, but from them to learn
Their future triumphs or their future woes;
As if Fate spoke through death, and did reveal
By death's convulsive starts the mystic seal!

XIII.

And yet, o'er Gallia's viny hills and plains,
And farther north, beyond the snowy Alps,
Where Austrian forests stretch their wide domains,
And the Carpathian mountains bare their scalps
To the cold moonlight; where the Baltic wave
Holds Winter frost-bound on his icy keel,
And Scythian hordes their shaggy ringlets lave
In melted snows, or wash the blood-stained steel—
All sought, by shedding floods of human gore,
The mysteries of the future to explore.

XIV.

And then it was, while sacrifice and sword
 Filled Woden's nostrils with the savoury breath
 Of victims slain by hundreds, that the horde
 In wine and wassail drowned the shriek of death ;
 And boisterous mirth convulsed the brutal crowd,
 While speechless pangs convulsed the quivering frame
 Of them they slew ; and lustily and loud
 They rioted and sang, to urge the flame
 Of mirthful cruelty and hellish fire—
 Laughing to see their fellow-men expire ! (4)

XV.

In yon cold Isle, where other fire is none
 Save Hecla's magazine of infernal fuel
 Hissing at Heaven, the same fierce deeds were done ;
 And men to be religious must be cruel :
 For, see ! the Victim's shuddering limbs they seize,
 And dash his head upon the sacred stone,
 Till blended brains and blood are left to freeze,
 And then to smoke, upon the altar strown—
 An offering given to appease that god,
 Who under Hecla holds his dark abode.

XVI.

Or, turn we to the south—see, Moloch stands
 On Canaan's coast—a horrid god of brass,
 Gleaming red-hot ; while with his outstretched hands
 He claims the blood of all who dare to pass :
 And parents come, inspired with holy awe,
 Leading their own sweet offspring at their knee,
 And cast them down into the fiery maw (5)
 Of that insatiable Deity ;
 While crowds applaud, and drown the piercing shriek,
 Which makes the very idol seem to speak.

XVII.

Or, darker still!—On Afric's sandy shore,
Where the hot sunbeam chars the glossy skin,
And Carthage listens to the sullen roar
Of the mid-ocean's everlasting din—
See, where yon temple rears its massive front,
Old Kronos stands on adamantine feet,
Surrounded by an ever-living font
Of boiling flames, which lash him with their heat,
Till the chafed idol seems to call for blood
To slake his parchèd throat, as with a flood.

XVIII.

Fear not, thou Demon! There are victims here—
Three hundred boys in youth's most early bloom;
Whose well-filled veins thy thirsty soul shall cheer—
For, thine they are by universal doom!—
Doomed to be thine, and all of noble birth—
The sons of merchant-princes, who have sworn, (6).
That, to arrest that conqueror of the earth,
Haughty Agathocles, their latest born—
Their dearest—their most beautiful shall die,
To quench the fury of the Gods on high.

XIX.

And here they are!—a fair and graceful sight—
With palpitating hearts and tearful eyes—
Their tender limbs all trembling with affright—
Their terror uttered in convulsive sighs—
But where is he, who has the heart which can
Inflict on these fair images of God
The doom which He commands not, but which Man
Has sanctioned with his magisterial nod?
Where is the villain who can lift the knife
To shed upon the ground that throbbing life?

XX.

What ! Do I see three hundred men of death,
All armed with cutlass—one for every boy ?—
And who are these that dare to stop the breath
Of fellow-creatures—late, so full of joy—
So full of gaiety, and bounding mirth,
And warmest feelings gushing from the heart ?
Ah ! must it be that on the lovely earth
They may no longer gaze ? And must they part
From sister, and from brother, and from those
Who brought them forth into this vale of woes ?

XXI.

Alas, their parents !—These three hundred men,
Who stand prepared to perpetrate the stroke,
Are their three hundred sires ! and all in vain
Their pity and their mercy they invoke ;
For those who gave them life must now resume
That breath which they have lent them for a time ;
And each prepares to execute the doom ;
For *holy homicide* is not a crime !
Each gives the stab, and from each tender side
Each sees his own blood gush in a full tide !

XXII.

Then, while the limbs yet quiver with the life,
And each young lamp is flickering to expire—
Their murderers toss them from the butchering knife,
To roast and welter in the sacred fire—
Meet burnt-offerings, to supply with food
Th' insatiate stomach of their hungry Lord !
For what so delicate, or what so good,
Or what so priceless could this world afford,
As these live dainties—slain by their own sires,
And roasted and prepared in sacred fires ?

XXIII.

What think ye of these men who thus could slay
Their tender offspring with *paternal knife*?—
Who thus could rudely stab, and wrench away, [life?
Those hearts which they had filled with throbbing
Villains, ye call them! Yet it is not so;—
For these were good and patriotic men!
And, oh! that cruel unresisted blow
Was deemed most noble and heroic then—
For priests did consecrate the horrid deed,
And faith, not fury, made the victims bleed!

XXIV.

Ah, yes! It was an error of the mind,
And not the error of a callous heart,
Which made these fathers, to their creed resigned,
Perform this tragical and bloody part;—
For, had you looked into their inmost soul,
You would have seen those scalding tears within,
Which dared not down their rigid cheeks to roll—
For every tear would have been deemed a sin!
Yet, rather, if their priests had said the word, [sword!
Would they have plunged in their own hearts the

XXV.

Oh! if Religion, pure and undefiled,
Did work in us with the same potent sway,
As that which made the father stab the child,
On that eclipsed and accursed day—
Then would the soul of gentleness and peace
Inform a world of jubilee and joy;
And each discordant element would cease
To dim our pleasures with a base alloy
Of that which men call pleasure, but which God
Has smitten with the vengeance of his rod.

XXVI.

What hath not Superstition set apart
 As honourable, sacred, and Divine ?
 What demon-passion of the human heart
 Hath she not consecrated in her shrine ?
 What vile obscenities and guilty rites
 Hath she not covered with a holy veil ?
 What thirst of blood and hell-born appetites,
 (At which the face of Reason waxeth pale),
 Boiling like Etna in the human breast,
 Hath she not fostered—deified—caressed ?

XXVII.

There is a music, ravishing the ears,
 Which vibrates softly from Eolian strings—
 There is a fabled music of the spheres,
 With which the planetary concave rings—
 And, sweeter still, there is a solemn gush
 Of choral melody, which sweeps along,
 (Like sound of many rivers, as they rush
 O'er pebbly beds, in a full tide of song,)
 Sent forth upon the angel of the breeze
 From yonder church half-hid among the trees—

XXVIII.

Such music prostrateth the soul of man,
 And earth is Heaven while trancèd with the spell—
 Yet sweeter music swells, if sweeter can,
 Than ear may listen to, or tongue can tell,
 When human hearts are tunèd to accord
 With the deep harmony which rules on high ;
 And which, breathed forth in the *Creative Word*,
 Evolved the gorgeous drapery of the sky,
 And charmèd forth from the abyss of night—
 All beaming with young smiles—the new-born light.

XXIX.

This is that WORD, in unison with which
The angels strike their everlasting lyres,
And, still aspiring to a loftier pitch,
Excite within their souls *sublime desires* :
This is that WORD, which breathes in Nature's ears
Omnipotent music, thrilling with its sound
The planets as they march their crystal spheres
Like sentinels, in one eternal round—
Spell-fettered, and impelled through yonder sky,
While day to day and night to night reply.

XXX.

This is the WORD, which, to evoke from Man
A sound responsive to the voice of Heaven,
Hath executed that stupendous plan,
Whereby a SPIRIT to the earth is given,
Which bloweth where it listeth—here and there
Touching the harp-strings of the human soul,
And striking forth the melody of prayer,
Till down the Heavenward cheek the feelings roll,
Thawed into tears—as if the heart arose,
And, welling over, said—“My cup o'erflows !”

XXXI.

Yes, true Religion sheddeth tears of bliss,
But Superstition's tears are tears of woe—
Or tears of blood, wrung forth by wretchedness
From the blind eye, which hath not learned to know
Darkness from light, or that which is of God
From that which is of Hell's infernal plan—
And which, albeit discord, sends abroad
A sound too much in unison with man
Not to awake a response in the breast,
With jarring interests and desires oppressed.

XXXII.

Man's soul was once in harmony attuned
 With Heaven's will, and this was perfect bliss ;
 But, ever since the Serpent's fatal wound
 Shot poison through the sweets of Paradise,
 His feverish heart, envenomed and depraved,
 Hath beat in dissonance with his Maker's word ;
 And, to the Serpent's basilisk eye enslaved,
 He deifies the Devil as his Lord ;
 And seeks out gods, whose worship and whose rites
 May chime with his own guilty appetites.

XXXIII.

Yea, and he makes them with his own right hand,
 Reversing nature ; for, though God made man,
 Man also has made God, and filled the land
 With myriads of Gods—a cunning plan ;
 For, what he makes he has a perfect right
 To shape and suit according to his taste,
 And so as not alone to please the sight,
 But e'en to please his appetites misplaced ;—
 For, why should man invent and frame a god
 To scourge his passions with a fiery rod ?

XXXIV.

Yet, strange to say, the gods whom he did make,
 And fashion, and conceive in his own mind,
 Do, ever and anon, like *Æsop's* snake,
 Prove most ungrateful, cruel, and unkind,
 By stinging man, their maker and their slave—
 Yea, what was *Frankenstein* himself but *MAN* ? (7)
 Who formed a monster his own power to brave,
 And cunningly to thwart his maker's plan—
 As man did strive to do ; and thus was driven
 To make a Heaven of Hell—a Hell of Heaven ! (8)

XXXV.

For, sure, the Roman Heaven was a Hell,
In which the fiercest passions of the soul
Did rage and riot with unlicensed swell—
Not checked, as on the earth, by Hell's control—
And where was Rome's Elysium ? Was it not
Divided only by a fiery stream
From that Cimmerian and infernal spot,
Where lashing waves did cast their lurid gleam
On victims writhing, not in mute despair,
But rending with their shrieks the sulph'ry air ?

XXXVI.

And hence we find that even polished Rome—
Polished though martial—had her butcher-priests,
Who catered for the gods, and sent them home,
Not merely vulgar hecatombs of beasts,
But triple hecatombs of human flesh,
To grace th' ambrosial *recherchē* fare
Of these god-cannibals, and to refresh
Their jaded appetites with something rare—
Yea, sometimes living blood was largely shed,
To glut the vampyre-manes of the dead ! (9)

XXXVII.

Th' Almighty formèd man, as it is writ,
In his own image ; and man formèd God
In his own image likewise, and to fit
His fallen nature : for, when Satan trod
Upon the heel of man, and made him halt,
So that no longer he could walk erect,
Or keep the narrow road, devoid of fault,
He wished a god who might have some defect,
As he himself had many, and he made
Imaginary gods, to whom he prayed.

XXXVIII.

These gods he clothed with human attributes—
 With human vice, if not with mortal dust,
 And feeling, interwoven with the roots
 Of his own nature, cruelty and lust :
 His piety was blasphemy ; for these
 He did attribute to the Heavenly race ;
 And sought with diverse victims to appease
 Their diverse appetites, and win their grace
 By shrinking not his loved ones to condemn—
 For *what he loved the most he gave to them.*

XXXIX.

This was the principle, which movèd man
 To murder man, that he might honour God ;
 And therefore, when th' Almighty first began
 To shed the rays of Heavenly light abroad,
 It pleased Him, on that memorable day
 When faithful Abram, by Divine command,
 Did lift the knife his only son to slay,
 To snatch the victim from his trembling hand—
 Thus to destroy the practice in the bud,
 By shewing that He asked not *human* blood. (10)

XL.

Yet even Canaan's consecrated shades
 Did often blush blood-red with guilty shame,
 While Israel's infant-boys and blooming maids (11)
 Headlong were cast into the greedy flame ;
 And Tophet's rocks re-echoed with the yell
 Of consecrated agony and death—
 Rather resembling a terrestrial hell,
 Fanned by the blast of Superstition's breath,
 Than aught connected with religious rites—
 So hideous were the sounds, so horrible the sights !

XL.I.

And even where the Gospel's milder ray
Has shed its smiles on the regenerate world,
And Pagan temples have been swept away,
And Christian warriors have their flag unfurled,
Religion's ministers have framed the rack, [breath,
And turned the torturing screw, and choked the
Till every sinew has been heard to crack,
And every limb has died a separate death—
And Cruelty, attired in priestly guise,
Has looked upon the scene with smiling eyes !

XL.II.

It is not now ; but there was once a day,
When Popery built for herself a school,
With iron books—wherein, historians say,
The art of torturing was taught by rule,
And studied deeply, and expounded well
In practice—not in theory alone—
'Mid dungeons, deep as the dark pit of hell,
Where glimmering tapers on the damp walls shone,
And silence reigned—except when shrieks arose,
Which spoke of clenched teeth and agonizing throes.

XL.III.

Most holy Inquisition ! Sacred scene
Of many a pang which groans could not express !
Beneath thy venerable roof hath been
More suffering and awful wretchedness,
Than ever on the red and gory field,
When sword with sword clashed music to the ear,
And forth from clouds of smoke loud thunder pealed,
So audible that even the dead might hear—
If death were not a dungeon—shutting out
Sight, sound, and sense—the battle and the shout.

XLIV.

Farewell, thou hall of livid lips and cheeks—
 And cruelty more cruel than to slay—
 And quivering limbs—and death-imploring shrieks—
 And sounds of horror which have died away—
 Yet not unechoed in these vaults severe—
 And not unechoed in th' historic page,
 Where mercy pauses, dropping a warm tear
 On the dark record of a darker age,
 When cruelty beside the altar stood,
 And kissed the crucifix, and wore a hood !

XLV.

Thy reign has ceased ; and o'er my native land—
 And other lands—a purer ray is shed ;
 And cowled tyrants grasp with feebler hand,
 The claspèd Bible and the glittering blade :
 And though, perchance, Religion's awful name
 Is often borrowed, even yet, to give
 A sacred sanction to foul deeds of shame,
 Which cannot look upon the light and live—
 A brighter day has dawned, and man is freed
 From the worst bondage—*an inflicted creed !*

XLVI.

Yet not alone amid the ancient fanes,
 Reared by idolatry to gods of clay—
 Nor only in the wide and dark domains
 Of popish ignorance and priestly sway,
 Have Cruelty and Superstition, hand in hand,
 Gone forth to torture, persecute, and slay ;
 For even, alas ! in our own father-land,
 Not many swift-winged years have passed away,
 Since Popery was outstripped in deeds of shame,
 By those who bore the Presbyterian name.

XLVII.

Scarce are the smouldering embers yet extinct
Of many a faggot, lit by our own faith ;
And many a knoll and mountain-side are linked
With the remembrance of a deed of death—
Such, or more dire and horrible to tell
Than that which in the following page is given,
In the fond hope, that he who ponders well
On the sad destiny of Kate M'Niven,
May learn from thence that men are much the same,
Whatever be their colour, creed, or name !

We met with many wonders by the way, and with great sorrow; for hard by the bridge, over the brook which runs into the Schmolle, stood the housekeeper her hateful boy, who beat a drum, and cried aloud, "Come to the roast goose! come to the roast goose!" whereupon the crowd set up a loud laugh, and called out after him, "Yes, indeed, to the roast goose! to the roast goose!" * * * * * This and much filthiness beside, which I may not for very shame write down, we were forced to hear, and it especially cut me to the heart to hear a fellow swear that he would have some of her ashes, seeing that nought was better for the fever or the gout, than the ashes of a witch.—*Amber Witch.* Cap. XXVII.

— subito non vultus, non color unus,
Non comptae mansere comae, sed pectus anhelum,
Et rabie fera corda tument; majorque videri,
Nec mortale sonans; adflata est numine quando
Jam propiore dei.

Virg. En. L. VI.

THE HOLOCAUST;
OR,
THE WITCH OF MONZIE.

BOOK SECOND.

THE MERRY GATHERING—THE WITCH-PROPHECYING—
AND THE WITCH-BURNING.

I.

THE sun's slant rays had tinged with roseate light
Yon snow-clad hills, which through the welkin rise,
Where tall Benvoirloch rears his alpine height,
And spear-like precipices pierce the skies;
The breath of morn, as fresh as when at first
It swept young odours from the infant-soil,
Ere yet that soil for fallen man was cursed,
Or healthful labour had become a toil,
Went forth in sweetness, and the sparkling dews
Bathed the red heath-bell in their myriad hues.

II.

Up the hill-sides, as from a field of fight,
 Where the loud cannon pours its murky shade,
 (As if it strove, in darkness and in night,
 To hide the carnage which itself had made),
 Vast wreaths of mist, in long gray masses piled,
 Rolled their dark columns like retreating crowds ;
 And Kap-na-claine in all his glory smiled
 To see his night-robe glittering in the clouds,
 While swiftly at his foot, through yonder glen,
 As Shaggie murmurs now, it murmured then.

III.

Earth was awake—and o'er my native land,
 In cloudless lustre, streamed the eastern sun ;
 And Nature smiled, as if some magic wand
 Had touched with witchery all he shone upon ;
 And happiness, and purity, and bliss,
 Seemed all afloat upon the buoyant air ;
 While, gazing round on such a scene as this,
 One would have deemed there could be nothing there
 But peace, and quietude, and holy love,
 To everything around, below, above.

IV.

Above, below, around, a scene it was,
 Which might have charmed the leaden eye of death ;
 But let us look *within*—for there, alas !
 A fiend hath blighted with his poisonous breath
 A fairer scene than ever poet sung,
 Or morning-star did gild with heavenly light—
 A moral paradise, when earth was young,
 But now a hell, where passions dark as night
 Roll to and fro in sin's tumultuous strife,
 And seek with deeds of *death* to darken *life*.

V.

Within there is a curse—there is a scourge—
A latent devil in the heart of man,
Which ever and anon awakes to urge
Some dark device, or some infernal plan;
And soon, alas! you must behold the scene—
The glorious scene which I have thus portrayed—
So beautiful and gladsome and serene—
Darkened and blighted by a moral shade,
More dreadful far than when the cannon's breath
Rolls forth in clouds to hide the march of death.

VI.

From lowly *sheilins*, scattered here and there,
O'er the hill-side, and down the woody steep,
The blue smoke curls, and blending with the air,
It whispers that the balmy hour of sleep
Hath passed away, while in the simple *quern*
The busy housewife speeds the morning meal, (1)
To lend that strength which may another earn,
At the strong plough, or the domestic wheel;
For man and wife have each a separate part,
And labour starved is but indifferent art.

VII.

Their meal is ready. At the frugal board,
Each humble cottager, on humble fare,
Refreshes nature, and can ill afford
More than his morning meal and morning prayer—
Then sallies forth to breathe the fragrant air
So bright and bracing on the mountain-side:
For who so poor as that he cannot share
The healthful luxury of morning-tide,
When his warm heart, so feverish at night,
Feels young and buoyant with the morning light?

VIII.

Forth from the village, with its walls of clay,
And thatched roofs and pig-styes evermore,
Each humble pendicler explores his way,
First to the dark low threshold of his door
Through clouds of smoke, and like the burrowing mole,
Moving by instinct rather than by sight,
Until at length emerging from his hole,
His eyes can scarce endure the solar light,
When not diluted, as within it was,
With smoke of peat, and one dull pane of glass.

IX.

At length his vision, reconciled to this,
Surveys the beauteous and enchanting scene—
The distant mountain-tops, which seem to kiss
The ocean of the sky—the earth so green—
The grassy lawn all pendulous with dew—
The tall trees waving on the Broomieknowes—
The churchyard, fenced with never-fading yew—
And wingèd songsters, from its shady boughs,
Pouring forth melody, as if they strove
To wake some sleeping echo in the grove.

X.

He sees all this—and, through the sense of sight,
Unconscious bliss is poured into his mind---
Although he views it not with that delight
Which nature only yields to souls refined,
And cultivated tastes, for 'tis a book
Which must be studied to be read aright;
And millions are, who all their life can look,
Yet understand not; for the sense of sight
Is not the mind; and few who look abroad,
Can see, in nature's mirror, nature's God.

XI.

But still, a scene so exquisitely fair
As that which smote on every gazer's eye,
Smote likewise on the heart and settled there,
Diffusing o'er the soul a placid joy :
And some went down to view their sprouting grain,
Where now the envious glebe usurps the ground,
Smiling in patches o'er the sloping plain,
And breathing vegetable fragrance round :
While others sauntered to the market-green---
The market once, but now the *laird's* demesne.

XII.

A few went strolling up the verdant side
Of Shaggie's limpid and romantic wave---
To that wild spot, where, in his Highland pride,
He plunges deep into a watery grave---
And then with foaming mouth, as if in wrath
At such a swift and unexpected leap,
Roars fiercely on, along his rocky path,
Until another plunge, as long and deep,
Subdues his pride, and sends him down the glen,
More cautious by his fall---a type of men.

XIII.

And all are dressed in holiday attire—
For this is such a day as has not been
Since the last witch was burnèd *quick* with fire ; (2)
And that's a sight which few of them have seen :
But all agree, that if there ever lived
A veritable witch beneath the sun,
Who ought to die unpitied and unshrived,
Old Catharine M'Niven must be one ;
For never on this wicked earth, they say,
Did withered hag such hellish cantrips play.

XIV.

And many a tale of strange mysterious cast
Was heard with looks of wonder and dismay,
While the revolving hours went quickly past,
And then each wanderer took a separate way ;
But most essayed to climb the lofty Knock,
On whose steep brow the fatal spots were seen,
Where Scotia's native fir and sturdy oak,
Just bursting into foliage fresh and green,
Shook with the heavy axe, till round and round (3)
The hills reverberated with the sound.

XV.

Already, on the high projecting ledge
Of yon tall cliff which overhangs the vale,
The stake was planted like a solid wedge ;
And many a lovely face waxed sad and pale,
To see the fatal faggots piled around,
All covered over with infernal pitch,
Polluting with its streams that spot of ground,
Where soon the blackened ashes of the witch
Were doomed to lie uncharnelled—while, alas !
Her wicked soul to other flames should pass.

XVI.

But wherefore linger near a scene like this,
While all around is tumult and delight ?
Behold what groups, in joy and gladsomeness,
Come pouring forth to see the merry sight !
Crieff is astir—and from each street and lane, (4)
The sturdy villagers, with staff in hand,
Clamber the Knock—and few behind remain,
Save those who cannot walk, or even stand—
Yea, many a *carle* attempts that rugged way,
Who has not moved abroad for many a day.

XVII.

From Comrie, too—environed all 'round (5)
With cloud-capt hills and pinnacles of rock,
Which echo to the torrent's rushing sound,
 Or heave and tremble with the earthquake's shock—
They come in clusters, passing gaily on,
 By the deep lake of princely Ochtertyre ;
Where Nature, seated on her Highland throne,
 Unfolds a scene, which struck poetic fire
From the rapt soul of Scotia's sweetest bard ;
Whose life was song—and song his sole reward.

XVIII.

From Muthill, and from Methven, many come ;
 Some from Glenguaich, and some from Amulree ;
From Kenmore and from Aberfeldy some, (6)
 With scarce one shoe or bonnet among three :
For these were yet a bold and hardy race,
 Despising luxuries and hating laws ;
With savage courage stamped upon their face,
 And ardent to engage in any cause
Which promised plunder, bloodshed, or renown,
Or Chevalier St. George a throne and crown.

XIX.

They came not through that deep and narrow glen,
 Where the clear Almond pours its glassy stream ;
For General Wade had not constructed then (7)
 Those roads which like the work of magic seem ;
But straight across the wilderness of hills,
 With buoyant step, they made their way along ;
Now scaling rocks, and now descending rills,
 But seldom steering doubtfully or wrong ;
Until at length they gained their journey's end,
And borrowed what their hosts refused to lend.

XX.

Already, spreading over half the vale,
A vast and motley multitude were seen,
Threading the woods; or quaffing stoups of ale,
While seated in thick clusters on the green;
But still they gathered from each nook and glen,
From every hamlet in the country round;
And troops of children, women, and old men,
With ruddy health and exercise embrowned,
Came pouring in, as to an annual fair,
Or something yet more wonderful and rare.

XXI.

From Auchterarder came a goodly crowd,
All dressed in holidays; and many a gibe
Was bandied to and fro, and long and loud
The laughter echoed from each little tribe
Of families and friends, who journeyed all
In knots and groups, as if they made their way
Right jovially, and glad to make a call
On distant friends. So like a market-day
Was the whole scene, that no one could have guessed,
'Twas to a place of death they made such haste.

XXII.

From Fowlis and Logiealmond, even from Perth, (8)
The rabble-magnitude poured thick and fast,
Until it seemed as if the conscious earth
Believed this spectacle might be the last
Of Fire and Faggot she would e'er behold,
Lighted by *legal cruelty and crime*:
For never did such hosts of young and old,
Of tottering crones, and women in their prime,
Of high and low, of poor men and of rich,
Assemble at the burning of a witch.

XXIII.

That noble bridge, which spans the arrowy Tay, (9)
Where the North Inch embanks its western side,
Was yet unbuilt ; and many a boat that day,
With a live cargo, clove its crystal tide ;
For many from the Carse of Gowrie came,
And not a few as far as from Dundee,
To visit those on whom they had a claim
Of *kith* and kin, in Perth or in Monzie :
For in those days, if chronicles be true,
A journey such as this was nothing new.

XXIV.

Then out they sallied, after frugal fare,
On good brown ale and oaten bread and cheese—
For tea was then a beverage wondrous rare, (10)
Except among th' immutable Chinese—
And issuing through the western wall of Perth,
By gates of which the names alone remain,
Each with some burgher-friend exchanged his mirth,
And travelled onward in a pleasant vein—
Right glad of heart to see his native place,
And here and there to greet a well-known face.

XXV.

And women's tongues were plying fast and loose,
As the crowd moved along the slippery way ;
And much they talked about the roasted goose,
Which Satan would devour that blessed day ;
And some opined that such a withered crone
As Kate M'Niven was declared to be,
Would furnish little more than skin and bone
To any of the black fraternity ;
While others deemed, that, seasoned well with yew,
A living witch might make a savoury stew.

XXVI.

But some there were, who differed from the rest,
And thought, or seemed to think, the witch's fate
Deserved not thus the ribald-laugh and jest,
But rather to be held in righteous hate ;
And not a few among that motley throng
Averred that witchery was all a lie,
And urged the controversy loud and long,
Some in deep earnest, some in raillery ;
Till short of patience, argument, and breath,
All reached at length the destined place of death.

XXVII.

And now the radiant orb of heat and light
Was fast approaching to his western goal,
Where woody Turlem rears his giant height,
And Earn's streams in glittering currents roll ;
And countless multitudes, from far and near,
Covered the vale and lined the lofty rocks,
Which made the scene from neighbouring heights appear
A gathering vast of cattle and of flocks ;
For never in Monzie had living man
Seen such a multitude since time began.

XXVIII.

And soon the crowd, which during many an hour
In silent patience had been lingering there,
Began, like darkening thunderclouds, to lower,
And with impatient shouts to rend the air ;
And to and fro, as when the molten glass
Of ocean's mirror is dispersed in spray,
An angry murmur swept the living mass,
Rushed down the hill, and slowly died away ;
And then again, still louder and more loud,
It burst into a shout from all the crowd.

XXIX.

At length a movement on the western side,
Proclaimed the object of their rage at hand ;
And like a vessel steering through the tide,
A cart, surrounded by a martial band, (11)
Was seen advancing by a winding route,
To where the stake was planted in the ground ;
And all the crowd began to hiss and hoot,
And vie in horrid dissonance of sound—
When Kate M'Niven's *laithely* form was seen,
Attired in mock-habiments of green.

XXX.

She uttered not a word, while many a voice
Was shouting imprecations fierce and loud ;
But when at length the clamour and the noise
Had died away along the furious crowd—
“ Ye hell-hounds,” she exclaimed, “ ye bring me here,
To die a death which ye would spare a dog !
Beshrew-me, if ye do not pay full dear
For all this waste of faggot and of log !
The time is near, when ye shall rue this day,
And call to mind the words which now I say.”

XXXI.

“ *Waeworth* the witch !” a thousand voices cried—
“ Down with the hag, and tear her limb from limb”—
“ No, no”—said others, “ let the witch be fried ;
Perhaps she will not burn, though she can swim.” (12)
“ Light up the pile,” a cruel voice exclaimed,
“ And spit her on a pitch-fork for a time,
Until her valour is a little tamed,
And then perchance she may confess her crime ;
For that's the only Christian plan, I guess,
To make a witch be honest and confess.”

XXXII.

“ She hath confessed already,” uttered one, (13)
 Whose form was clad in robes of sacred black—
 “ At first she said that *warlock* she was none,
 But truth is best extorted by the rack ; (14)
 And therefore, in the great and solemn name
 Of *HIM* who gave that woman life and breath,
 I do consign her body to the flame,
 To save her soul from everlasting death—
 If mercy yet remain, as I do trust,
 For a poor sinful worm of the dust.”

XXXIII.

“ *Where is the proof?*” exclaimed a voice unknown, (15)
 And others shouted out—“ *The proof! the proof!*”
 When suddenly a mingled yell and groan,
 Rose from the mob to Heaven’s vaulted roof ;
 And reason’s voice, so feeble in a crowd,
 Was drowned and lost in the blood-thirsty yell ;
 Though some there were who dared to speak aloud,
 What many thought but did not care to tell ;
 For reasoning with excited crowds of men,
 Is much like bearding tigers in their den.

XXXIV.

When this subsided—“ You demand the proof?”
 Exclaimed again the messenger of grace—
 “ Let him who said so please to stand aloof,
 Or speak again that I may know his face”—
 He paused—but silence was the sole reply ;
 And then resuming his discourse, he said—
 “ By God’s own law a witch is doomed to die :
 This law, not man, but God himself hath made :
 To these plain words, who dare denial give, (16)
Thou shalt not suffer any witch to live?”

XXXV.

“Prove her a witch,” exclaimed the voice again—

“*The proof, the proof*”—was muttered here and
But whence these voices came—from living men, [there:

Or wandering spirits in the upper air—
There was not one of all the crowd could tell;
Though many a keen and scrutinizing gaze,
Was cast around, and prying glances fell
On some who were themselves in deep amaze.
At length they cried—“It is the witch herself,
Or some officious imp, or wicked elf.”

XXXVI.

“Whoever it be”—resumed the man of God,
“This is no place to vindicate the law;
Except by executing with the rod
What justice dooms, to keep the world in awe.
This woman is a witch. If proof you want,
Her own confession brands her with the crime;
And though she dared thereafter to recant,
We know that witches do so many a time;
When Satan, watching the propitious hour,
Subdues them by his artifice and power.”

XXXVII.

“*The woman is insane—you made her so—*
And now you murder her”—a voice replied,
Which seemed to issue from a cleft below,
Concealed with hanging shrubs on either side;
But scarcely had the accents died away,
When the poor maniac, starting to her feet,
Loudly exclaimed—“It is most false you say:
I’m not *bestrawght*—my senses are complete—
Yet here again I solemnly avow, (17)
That witch I am—Will that suffice you now?

XXXVIII.

“ *I am* a witch—if that be any crime—
 A witch I’ve lived, and as I’ve lived will die—
 But long and sadly ye shall rue the time
 That brought ye here to clamour and to cry ;
 For even now I see a coming flood, (18)
 Which, ere this very year has passed away,
 Shall drench the *braes* of Sherri’ Muir with blood,
 And many, who are here in life this day,
 Shall think of me, when with their dying breath
 They curse the hour they clamoured for my death.”

XXXIX.

“ The torch, the torch ! ” was now the general shout ;
 And forthwith she was fastened to the stake,
 With pitchy logs encompassed all about,
 And many a broken door and shattered flake.
 On these she stood as on a lofty mound,
 And soon the wreaths of smoke began to rise ;
 And then it was that, like the deafening sound
 Of fierce volcano darting to the skies,
 A shout arose, which shook the solid earth,
 And, some maintain, was even heard in Perth.

XL.

But while the sheets of mingled flame and smoke
 Began to thicken round her haggard form,
 Old Kate again with imprecations spoke,
 Like the controlling spirit of the storm :
 And looking round, as if she dared defy
 The utmost fury of the yelling mob,
 “ Ye cowards,” she exclaimed, “ I die—I die—
 And soon this heart of mine shall cease to throb.
 Another hour, and nought shall live of me,
 Except that bitter curse which you must *dree*.

XL.I.

“ A witch I am—and if a witch’s curse
Is fraught with mischief or with bale to man,
The parish of Monzie shall fare the worse,
And minister and flock shall *dree* the ban.
Yon bonny manse shall ne’er a tenant see, (19)
Who shall not yet this bitter day *abye* ;
And never shall the parish of Monzie
Forget the hour that I was doomed to die :
For either a mad woman or a sot,
Shall vex the parish while my ashes rot.

XL.II.

“ And Auchterarder too shall ashes see (20)
Ere yet the merry-making day of *Yule* ;
And many who are here shall think of me,
When *but* and *ben* shall glimmer *mirke* and *gule* ;
And every house shall be a cinder-heap,
Like that on which ye see me stand this day ;
While many a mother with her child shall sleep
In wreaths of snow until it melt away ;
And then, mayhap, the husband or the nurse
Shall think of Kate M’Niven and her curse.”

XL.III.

Scarce had the frantic woman ceased to speak,
When the black pile burst out into a blaze :
And then arose a blended shout and shriek,
From the dense masses who had come to gaze—
To gaze, and yet to shudder—for the sight
Was horrible to all whose hearts could feel ;
And some who saw her in that woful plight,
Blackened with smoke, and struggling to conceal
Her mortal agonies, did vow *bedeene*,
That ne’er again they’d come to such a scene.

XLIV.

“ I burn, I burn”—exclaimed the scowling hag—
 “ Yet tears I dare not shed—I cannot pray, (21)
 But death alone this mouth of mine shall gag,
 And curse I shall, so long as curse I may.
 Ye earth-born hounds ! ye fiends in human form !
 Oh ! had I here the mystery of my might—(22)
 Then should I raise amid these rocks a storm,
 More terrible than when, in gloom of night,
 Uprooting rocks, and horrifying men,
 The tempest howls through Ossian’s narrow glen.”

XLV.

She said, and, raving, gnashed her toothless jaws—
 Looking those curses which her mouth was uttering ;
 When swift there rose, amid the death-like pause,
 A strange wild distant low unearthly muttering.
 It seemed above, or under, or around—
 No one knew where—but loud and louder still
 It waxed and grinded—till the solid ground
 Shook like an aspen-leaf, and the huge hill
 Heaved forth deep groans, as from its roots of rock,
 And every tree stood tottering with the shock.

XLVI.

At length, with *eerie* shudder moving past,
 The sound was heard beneath, with heavy tramp ;
 And man and woman then did look aghast,
 As if they thought the opening earth would swamp
 The living mass which on its surface stood,
 Tier above tier along the mountain-side,
 A countless, speechless, breathless multitude—
 Mantling the rocks, and stretching far and wide,
 On one old woman’s dying hour to gaze—
 And watch the sparklings of a bonfire-blaze.

XLVII.

But now their thoughts were for themselves, and loud
Were heard the shriek, and the half-muttered vow ;
And terror rode rough-shod along the crowd,
And perspiration stood on every brow.
One—one alone, was calm and undismayed—
Aloft she stood upon the murky pile,
Wrapped in alternate bursts of flame and shade,
And with clenched fist, and with a fiendish smile—
“ Ye craven-hearts,” she cried, “ ye came to gaze—
Why look ye not ? why stand ye in amaze ?

XLVIII.

“ ‘Tis but a sound ye hear—I have a voice
To utter words more terrible and dread
Than the mere wailing of a harmless noise—
Yea, than the shaking of an earthquake’s tread : (23)
For I can speak in curses, and I do,
To you, and to your children, and to all
Who left their *ingle-sides* to come and view
A woman shrouded in her funeral pall,
And watch her parting breath. My breath shall part—
But let it go in *curses* from my heart.

XLIX.

“ I burn—I burn—but there are flames within—
Flames redder, hotter, brighter, fiercer still—
Flames, which shall never end, which now begin,
And feed upon my life—yet cannot kill.
Oh ! that they could. My flesh is roasting red, (24)
Till the oil droppeth from each finger-point—
My blood is boiling at the fountain-head ;
And stiff, and dry, and stark, is every joint.
All this I reck not—’tis a fiercer flame,
That melts my very soul within my frame.

L.

“ What is *your* fury ? I can laugh at *you*—
 Ye black incendiaries ! ye craven race ! [through,
 Your pitchy flames may scorch me *through and*
 And lash their sulph’ry smoke into my face—
 I spit it out, as I do spit the ban,
 Which, like a poisonous toad, I now bequeath
 To you and yours—reject it if you can.
 It is a judgment sent you from beneath—
 Not from above : for unto you is given,
 Not even a blasting judgment-stroke from Heaven.

LI.

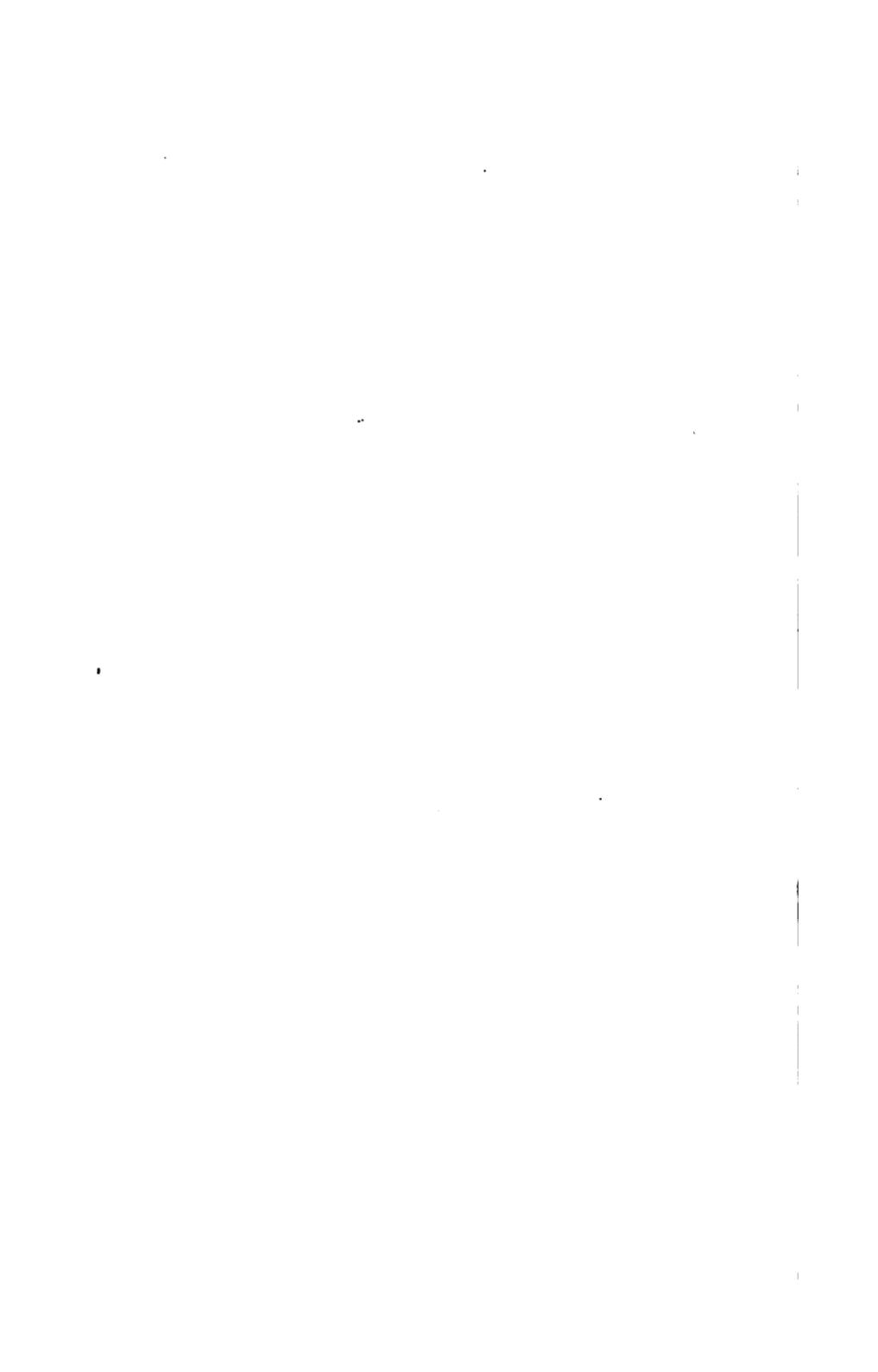
“ And yet I have a benison to give—(25)
 I spit it out, as I have spat my curse :
 And *there it is*—Inchbrakie’s house shall live,
 Nor want an heir, a nurseling, or a nurse,
 So long as they preserve that pledge of mine.
 But, if they *tyne* it, woe betide the day !
 For then Inchbrakie’s sun shall cease to shine—
 Inchbrakie’s bonny lands shall melt away ;
 And then, alas ! the ancient house of Greeme
 Is doomed to merge into another name.

LII.

“ And now, I die upon a burning bier,
 And yet my name and curses shall survive ;—
 When scarce of all who now are standing here
 Shall one be known to have been ere alive,
 My name shall live, and may perchance descend
 To distant ages like a beacon-brand :
 For with this cruel death of mine, shall end
 The reign of FIRE AND FAGGOT in the land.
Fareweel ye bonny hills, *sae* fresh and blue !
 I die—but not to leave a curse with you.”

LIII.

She said, and sank into the tottering pile,
Which now flared up into a furious blaze ;
And not a whispered sound was heard the while,
For every eye was fixed in earnest gaze,
Expecting still to see her shrivelled form
Appear amid the eddying of the smoke :
But the flames sounded, like a rushing storm
Through the thick foliage of a mountain-oak,
And not a single vestige could they see ;
For miserable Kate had ceased to be.



P A R T III.

LAYS OF PALESTINE.

By Babel's streams we sat and wept,
When Zion we thought on.
In midst thereof we hang'd our harps
The willow-trees upon.
For there a song required they,
Who did us captive bring:
Our spoilers called for mirth, and said,
A song of Zion sing.

Psal. cxxxvii, 1, 2, 3.

LAWS OF PALESTINE.

THE HOLY LAND,

AS IT WAS, AND AS IT IS.

I stood on Lebanon. Eternal snows,
In solitude and silence, there repose :
Relentless winter claims it as his own ;
And the bright crystals of his icy throne
Gleam o'er an ocean of tumultuous hills,
And viny vales, and meads, and living rills.

I stood in silence. Rich Damascus lay
Towards the *north*, not many hours away :
Her olive-covered plains, her orange-trees,
Threw their rich fragrance on the northern breeze ;
And, stretching wide, her sunny vales were seen,
A deep umbrageous mass of wavy green.

Far to the *east* a dreary desert was,
Where erst Palmyra had—indeed still has

Her solitary empire rearing high—
 Her fabrics fraught with grace and majesty.
 Proud ruin ! once as an oasis known,
 And now a desert in a desert grown—
 Where are thy splendours ? Have they taken wings,
 And left behind them nought but ruined things ?
 Yea, in the desert thou appear'st to me,
 A type of time amid eternity !

I turned me to the *west*—and far away
 The pale Levant in quiet slumber lay.
 Sea of soft isles ! Where thy blue billows swell,
 The creatures of our youthful visions dwell :
 Yea, they have peopled thy bright coral caves,
 And shed a sunny lustre o'er thy waves :
 The dreams of poesy have drawn from thee
 Their fairest apparitions—glorious Sea !

At length I turned towards the *south*, and there
 The brightest, wildest, fairest visions were—
 Scenes of sublime reality, and such
 As rise not at the fancy's magic touch—
 Scenes that are peopled by no poet's dream,
 But are or were precisely what they seem—
 Scenes amid which to sinful man 'twas given
 To hold high converse with the God of Heaven—
 With Him who rules unrivalled and alone,
 And knowing all things, yet himself unknown !

How can we doubt ? August memorials stand
 To mark thee out, thou tossed and troubled land !
 As God's once-favoured. From the western sea
 To Gilead's heights, he overshadowed thee—
 Brooding upon thee ; and the fertile Ghor,
 Bright with *His* shadow, sunny harvests bore.

Amana's wine, and Asher's fragrant oil,
Exuded then spontaneous from the soil ;
And milk and honey then, at Heaven's command,
Flowed in thy vallies, thou accursèd land !

Wreck of a nation ! whither art thou tossed—
'Reft of thy pilot, and thy rudder lost ?
God was thy pilot. Through tempestuous seas
He urged thee on, superior to the breeze :
Proudly he bore thee ; nor along the strand
Swayed thy frail rudder with a trembling hand,
But far in middle sea, devoid of fear,
Himself thy pole-star, pressed thy bold career.

Reveal, historic muse ! reveal the day,
When Paran's pitchy clouds were rolled away ;
And on, their armour clad in lambent flame,
In countless files THE CHOSEN PEOPLE came.
God was their leader, and the heavenly hosts
Hung as spectators o'er the neighbouring coasts ;
Or, where Mount Hermon dons his snowy hood,
Phalanx on phalanx, tier on tier, they stood.

At sight of Israel murmurs sweep along,
And breathless expectation moves the throng ;
For Canaan's savage strength superior seems,
And meteor-lustre in his eyeball gleams.
But God is Israel's : Sinai's rocks can tell
How for that host ambrosial manna fell ;
And Horeb lifts her pæan-voice to Him,
Who forth from Massah poured the living stream.

Children of Judah ! join the mighty choir :
Again with queenly Miriam strike the lyre ;

Or farther still the hallowed notes prolong,
And thus with Moses swell the voice of song—

The Israelites' Desert War-Song.

"The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir," &c.
Deut. xxxiii, 2.

I.

ON Sinai's heights the Lord was seen—
On Seir his whirlwind-step hath been ;
And far, where lonely Paran stands,
His chariot-wheel hath swept the sands.

Saw ye the Lord ?

II.

Swift as the tempest-cloud he went—
Nor bowed the reed, nor crushed the tent,
Though saints by myriads with him passed,
And rode upon the Simoom-blast.

Great is the Lord !

III.

On Sinai burst a shell of flame,
And forth a fiery statute came ;
Rolled the loud trumpet-sound from Heaven,
And then the Law of God was given.

Fear ye the Lord !

IV.

Jeshurun ! loud hosannahs sing,
And bid thy craggy mountains ring :
Let Hermon's giant-cedars nod ;
For Israel is the loved of God—

Yea, of the Lord.

V.

See where our banner streams on high,
And floats athwart the troubled sky—
Borne on the wing of angels past,
Our Shechinah it braves the blast.
Worship the Lord !

VI.

God is the Lord—a viewless shield—
Our bulwark on the battle-field :
Her Shechinah while Israel boasts,
She marches with the Lord of Hosts.
God is the Lord !

Such is the song, and cymbals clash around,
And booming sistrums breathe their martial sound ;
And vast and slow, as swells the tide of song,
The living deluge pours itself along.

Far in the van the race of Judah sweep,
In Ganges-columns, mighty, dark, and deep :
They heave along ; and, like an ocean tossed,
Succeeds the son of Zuar's countless host :
Eliab next ; and then the ark of God,
While Levites tremble with the sacred load.
Gleaming in gold, it passes slowly by,
And golden cherubs o'er the symbol fly :
High in mid-air they poise their flashing wings,
And seem to wave them, as the nation sings.

At length they meet in strife ; and from afar
The **Lord of Hosts** controls the tide of war :
Forth from his nostrils, like the Siroc's breath,
Issues the blast of carnage and of death.

Canaan recoils, and Jordan's streams divide,
While Israel marches through the ebbing tide—
Wide o'er the vallies pours her wandering race,
And finds at length a home, and resting-place.

Yet not for ever :—whither shall we turn
To trace the spot where the lost tribes sojourn ?
And whither—in the cold or torrid zone—
Where Judah's vagrant exiles are unknown ?
Again this land is empty and forlorn,
And waits—but waits in vain—their late return.
Ye rolling centuries ! hasten on the time,
When here again, in their appropriate clime,
That errant race shall fix their firm abode,
And worship whom they pierced—th' incarnate God.

A DRAMATIC SKETCH.

SCENE—*A Caravanserai in the Deserts of Idumea—*
Moonlight—ADOLPHUS, a Christian Traveller, seated
by a marble fountain, beneath a palm-tree.

ADOLPHUS.

MAGNIFICENT spectacle! Yon horned moon
Walks in her brightness—most unlike the faith
Of which her beauteous crescent is the badge.
Next to the sacred cross, that glittering horn
Were the best symbol of the Christian's faith—
So pure, so chaste, so gentle in its splendour.
Is it not mockery to recognize,
In that bright image of all purity,
The emblem of a foul unhallowed creed,
Which wallows in pollution—whose best hopes
Are mixed with grovelling pleasures, and whose author
Walked in all revelry and sensual sin?

Resplendent night! Beneath thy shadowing wings
We feel as in the arms of Deity:
The fair earth vanishes—the setting sun
Draws the rich landscape from us: glorious Heaven
Alone is visible; and twinkling orbs,
In radiant myriads, burst upon our view.
The eyes—the thoughts, are heavenward. Our globe
Descends into her station, and appears
A unit in the universe of God.

I love a cloudless night in any clime—
Even in Italy, where roseate morn
Embraces woody hills, and pours its light
On lakes, and lawns, and the deep-blushing grape.
How much more here, where the officious sun
Reveals no shape of beauty—where the earth
Is a monotony of drifting sand,
And yields no fruit but blight and barrenness !

What means this limitless expanse of sand ?
All nature hath its uses: wood and wold,
Mountain and valley, nay, the boundless sea,
Replete with finny tribes, is one vast mass
Of liquid life and happiness. But here
There seems an utter blank—no pulse of life
Plays o'er that barren, breathless wilderness.

Once only, when the host of Israel's sons
Sojourned upon them, did these dreary plains
Assume unto themselves a dignity,
And seem created for a mighty end.
Then swarmed they with life, and to and fro
The camp of Judah flitted spectre-like.
But God was with them—in a cone of fire
He walked the darkness, and their hosts pursued,
As yon long train of cometary light
Follows the nucleus *from which it springs*.
At length they sinned, and that unerring guide
Became their curse—an *ignis fatuus*,
Which led them to and fro in mockery,
Until they perished on the wilderness.

These were dread times; but they have passed away
And left no footprint in the naked sand :
No Shechinah is here—no timbrel-sound—

No hum of human voices—all around
Is sad, and sterile, and unprofitable.

[*He reclines in an attitude of meditation, and a Chorus of Voices is heard in the distance.*

Chorus of Approaching Voices.

I.

THE burning sand is our native land—
The wilderness our home :
With hurricane-speed, on our wingèd steed,
The moon-lit waste we roam ;
And the desert seems a retreating sea,
As we sit all lone and silently,
Beneath this starry dome.

II.

Our flight is mute : with unechoed foot
We hold our noiseless way ;
And the Simoom-blast, as it hurries past,
Is subject to our sway :
For lo ! 'tis our minister of wrath ;
And the fearless foe, that would cross our path,
That blast hath power to slay.

III.

Then away—away : let the Christian pray,
And the Kopt and Mamlouk toil—
Let the mourner weep, and the dreamer sleep,
We will traverse our native soil :
For within our breast is a mystic guest—
A spirit that will not give us rest—
Away—to the place of spoil.
[*As the last lines are sung, a troop of Bedouin-Arabs ride swiftly past and disappear.*

ADOLPHUS.

Almighty God ! what strange mysterious spirit
Moved into whirlwind-speed that fleeting cloud ?
And yet it is no mystery. These orbs—
These planets, wandering in the blue expanse,
Are moved by the same SPIRIT. Thy decree
Presses on both ; and both pursue the path,
Which Thou didst trace out for them from the first.
The power which guides this planet in its course,
Men call it gravitation ; and the power,
Which drags these Arabs o'er the sandy waste,
Is known by many names—the thirst of gain—
A restless spirit—a contempt of ease—
But let not names deceive us : 'tis THY will
That operates on both. ELOHIM said,
We will display our power : let wandering lights
Traverse the firmament :—the planets rose,
And, to and fro in the Cyanean vault,
Like glittering spirits, moved. ELOHIM said,
We will display our truth : let Ishmael's race
Be separate from men :—the word was fate,
And to and fro, upon a boundless waste,
They moved perpetually.

How wonderful in counsel is the Lord !
How jealous of his glory ! These wide sands
Are desolate and bleak. In other places
Waves the broad field with rich luxuriance ;
The blushing vine, with luscious clusters fraught,
Declares his bounty ; and the toppling rocks,
Piled unto heaven, speak his wondrous power.
But here—Earth has no voice to tell his praise :
The many tongues, with which in other climes
She doth articulate her Maker's name,
Are silent here. And shall the Omnipotent

Permit one part of all his wondrous works
To stand aloof, while from the universe
A choral halleluiah swells to Heaven ?
It may not be. He makes these barren wastes
The fit arena of his miracles :
Them too he gives a voice ; and even here,
In every Arab-print upon the sand,
I trace the footsteps of the living God.

TO A MORNING-RAY.

(Supposed to be written on Mount Lebanon before day-break.)

I.

CHILD of the orient eye !
In Persian gardens, stay ;
And bid not the shadowy night-cloud fly,
And usher not in the day.
Still amid Chundna's flowers delay ;
And oh ! be thy radiance far away—
Child of the orient eye !

II.

Thou art a thing of light,
On perfumed breezes borne :
Thou speak'st, and the Ebon-face of night
Is lit with the smiles of morn ;
And vermeil mists, with their dewy load,
In beauty and radiance walk abroad,
Before thee—thou thing of light !

III.

Yet stay, bright Cherub ! stay
Where Indian spices are,
Far amid Banyan-groves away—
Thou child of the morning-star !
Oh shed not on Lebanon's snows thy light,
And break not the mystic spell of night—
Child of the morning-star !

IV.

Surely the land of dreams—
The clime of thine own bright sun—
Her spicy fields, and her golden streams,
Have charms, thou beauteous one !
Well to beseem thy chosen bride,
And lure thy wandering foot aside—
Thou loved of the rising Sun !

V.

Then stay, where the softest breeze
Is shed on Rajmahal-rocks,
And linger long by the Eastern seas,
Or tarry by Meru's flocks ;
But shed not on Lebanon's snows thy light,
And break not the mystic spell of night—
Thou child of the morning-star !

THE RESCUE OF LOT.

And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother (*nephew*) was taken captive, he armed his trained servants born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.—*Gen. xiv, 13—16.*

I.

I WILL tell you a tale of our father-land,
When yet that land was young;
When each petty lord but spoke the word,
And his vassal-horde unsheathed the sword,
And the sling and the bow were strung;
And with glittering blade, they did invade,
Where'er they could make a successful *rajd*.

II.

Abram the Hebrew sat in his tent,
At the time of the morning sun,
When a man, with sweat and blood besprent—
His hair all wild, and his garments rent—
To the door of his tent did run.
And the old man listened with grief and rage,
Till his breathless tale was done;

For he said that four kings fierce war did wage,
And in Sodom's plain with five kings engage,
 And the victory they had won ;
And amongst the captives, he did allege,
 Was Lot his brother's son.

III.

Then Abram cried, "Let us give them chase—"—
 And his eyes were sparkling red—
"Let us give them chase, and meet face to face :
They 'll either put *us* in an evil case,
Or they 'll run a race ere they leave this place
 With my nephew, alive or dead."

IV.

So they brought a sword to our good old lord,
 And he girt it on his thigh ;
And his servants all, both great and small,
Vowed one and all to fight and fall,
 Ere the captive man should die.

V.

Then swiftly each, on his trusty steed—
 A horse or a camel tall—
Did mount with speed ; and they all agreed,
That they would indeed in battle bleed,
 Ere the captive Lot should fall.

VI.

And the women did bring them their sabres bright,
 And encouraged them not to quail ;
For the Lord, they said, would for Abram fight :
So away they went, a gallant sight,
 Three hundred stalwart men of might,
 All scouring down the vale.

VII.

Then up they took over Kedron's brook,
And along by the Jordan's bank ;
Still up the stream by its winding gleam,
Till its very waves they shrank ;
For at length they had pierc'd through Galilee,
To the head of Tiberias' star-lit sea.

VIII.

And the stars of night now sparkled bright,
But the foe he was still in advance ;
And they knew by yon height, which rose in sight,
And stream'd with light like a beacon bright,
That there, for the night, he had stopped his flight,
To indulge in the song and dance.

IX.

Then Abram cried, " Let us here divide—
A hundred in every lot :
You two shall ride from either side,
And I my hundred men shall guide
Straight forward to the spot ;
And soon as you hear the battle-shout,
We shall rush, and put all our foes to rout,
For our numbers they know not."

X.

Then in silence and shroud, like a thunder-cloud,
Each little band swept along ;
And although their march had been far more loud,
They might still have surprised that revelling crowd,
All absorbed in the dance and song :
For they rioted there with unlicensed glee,
On the dark red rocks of Galilee.

XI.

The Hebrews at length reached the place of death,
And there they asked aid of Heaven :
But, except that they whispered a prayer of faith,
Each warrior silently kept his breath,
Till the battle-word was given.
Then on he rushed, and with glittering blade
A fearful havoc and rout he made.

XII.

And the captives then, both women and men,
Were left on the field of fight :
For the foemen fled, and forgot their dead,
And the rocks were red with the blood that was shed,
And a thousand were slain in flight ;
And the springs of the Jordan were tinged with gore,
Which it carried in clots to the Dead Sea's shore.*

LIVERPOOL, November 23, 1844.

* This, by the bye, is a slight anachronism, as the Dead Sea is supposed not to have existed till some years subsequently to the date of the transaction recorded in these lines. It is a singular fact, that a certain traveller (I forget his name) has actually succeeded in tracing evident marks of the old channel of the Jordan, from the lower extremity of the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean—a circumstance which strikingly corroborates the Scriptural account of the destruction of the cities of the plain.

THE GARDENS OF SOLOMON.

AFTER describing the pools of Solomon as they now appear, and the desolate state of the sequestered valley in which were the sumptuous pleasure-grounds of that uxorious monarch, Mr. Wilson proceeds—"It is impossible to cast an eye on this now desolate scene of royal voluptuousness, without being forcibly struck with the justice of the sentiments which the monarch, whose residence it was, himself entertained as the bitter fruit of his experience. After having collected in this spot whatever could minister to the gratification of the senses, that luxury could devise, that wealth could purchase, or power command, he was in the end forced to make this sad and humbling conclusion, that 'all was but vanity and vexation of spirit.'"*—Wilson's Travels in the Holy Land*, Vol. I. p. 270.

THERE haggard famine drags the plough,
And desolation lords it now :
Revelling in dank luxuriance there,
 The deadly nightshade taints the ground ;
While crags on crags, abrupt and bare,
 Are piled in sterile grandeur round.

E'en as he trode that lonely vale,
 While yet it seemed one wide parterre,
Refreshed by Sihon's spicy gale,
 And fragrant with the breath of myrrh—

E'en gazing on the citron-bower,
Which bloomed in thick luxuriance there,
While gushed the artificial shower
On Sharon's purple-tufted flower,
An alien from its native air—
Nay, even while he quaffed the bowl,
And Eshcol's grape was flowing high,
And gold and glory seemed to roll
Before the monarch's wandering eye—
E'en then it was, that "All's a lie,
Vexation, heaviness of soul,
And weariness and vanity—"
Was muttered in the monarch's sigh ;
And this sad sigh of Israel's sage
Yet lingers in the sacred page.

*But now, when he essays in vain
To seize the glorious sight again,
The passing FOOL is heard to cry,
All is vexation—vanity.*

ISRAEL'S VICISSITUDES.

Que les temps sont changés.—Athalie.

I.

IT was an Eden. Fierce as death
The Assyrian waved his vengeful hand,
And war hath scorched with Simoom-breath
The gardens of Jehovah's land.
Destruction sits on Zion's brow,
And Salem's towers are widowed now.

II.

Proudly, on Sharon's scarf of green,
The aloes bore its sapphire crown ;
But there the hostile hoof hath been,
And Shushan's war-horse trode it down.
Fair, in the Kishon's ready bed,
The tall khalalou reared her crest ;
While, drooping low, her azure head
Slept on the Kishon's rippling breast.
Swift as the whirlwind passing by
Appears Assyria's scythed team,
And lo ! her scattered petals lie,
A wreck upon the troubled stream.

III.

Erst by Tiberias' star-lit sea
A thousand festal lamps were seen,

And mountain-mirth and midnight glee
On Jordan's woody banks had been.
Dark as the wine-cup circling round
Appeared each warrior's flashing eye,
While to the timbrel's stirring sound
High-bosomed maidens floated by.
They tripped it by the moon's bright ray,
Where the pale olive's shadow lay ;
Or, wandering in the wild arcade,
Where the soft myrtle threw her shade,
Mid vistaed rocks and waving trees,
Gave their long tresses to the breeze :
And brightly gleamed each warrior's eye,
As swept the beauteous visions by.

IV.

But hark ! there is heard an unearthly tramp,
And blue is the flame of each festal lamp,
And the lip is pale, and the brow is damp,
Of each warrior revelling there ;
For he scents the breath of the Assyrian camp,
Like a pestilence in the air.
On, on they come—though their march is dumb,
Except that dread unearthly tread,
Like the trampling of a troop of dead—
On, on they come—though their march is dumb ;
The bow is bent—the avenger sent—
The battle won ere the morrow's sun ;
And the work of the Lord is done.

THE MOSQUE OF OMAR.

THIS is the most magnificent structure in modern Jerusalem, and is believed to occupy the very site of Solomon's temple. No Christian may enter it, under penalty of instant decapitation. It has two names—El Haram and El Sakhara. The Sakhara is a huge stone in its most sacred recess, hallowed, in the eyes of the Mussulmans at least, by a deep impression of the Prophet's foot.

El Aksa is another temple, very beautiful, but inferior to El Haram, and in the vicinity of the latter. There is a delicious fountain in the gorgeous pleasure-grounds between them.

For a farther explanation of the allusions in the following poem, see *Notes*. I may here state, however, that the language and sentiments therein contained, are supposed to be addressed to a Frank or European by his Moslem-guide.

I.

CHILD of an unbelieving race—

Thou dark of thought and sad of eye!

Approach not thou this holy place;

For, Christian! know that thou must die—

If, where the Prophet's foot hath been,

Aught of thy gloomy faith is seen.

II.

Child of the stranger ! thine are thoughts (1)
Of shadowy hue and powers divine ;
But learn, that El Sakhara's vaults
Mock the attempts of arts like thine.
Abjure thy creed—renounce thy faith—
And Omar may not ask thy death.

III.

I know thee, Stranger ! Syria's sun
Hath deeply shed its fire on thee ;
And I have led thee, fearless one !
By Sinai's rock, and Sodom's sea ;
And oft, when Bedouin-hosts were nigh,
Have keenly marked thy cheek and eye.

IV.

But calmness and contempt were there—
Nor winced the eye, nor blanched the cheek,
Though the winged arrow scoured the air,
And, echoing far from peak to peak,
Was heard the Arab's carbine sound,
And death and danger sped around.

V.

Oft have I marked the lordly Frank
Regard me with a withering smile,
When, as the day-star seaward sank
Behind the viny mountain-isle,*
I knelt at Allah's high behest,
And turned me to the breezy west.

* Cyprus.

VI.

But thine was no unseemly mirth :
 Uncurled thy lip, and calm thy mien,
 As, prostrate on the lap of earth,
 I prayed to Allah the unseen,
 Or raised the Simoom-blasted sand (2)
 To lave my brow, and cleanse my hand.

VII.

Child of a thousand dangers ! thou
 Art one of no ignoble race ;
 For thought is stamped upon thy brow,
 And god-like beauty on thy face.
 I tell thee, Frank ! renounce thy faith,
 And Omar will not ask thy death.

VIII.

Behold ! with mournful cypress bound,
 El Haram lifts its snowy towers,
 And turbaned warriors saunter round,
 Or rest amid the breath of flowers ;
 While Aksa's dome and Syria's sky
 Deep in yon shadowy fountain lie.

IX.

These are delights which God hath given
 Alike to true and false of faith ;
 But Allah reigns alone in Heaven,
 And there, th' unerring Prophet saith—
 That youth, and amaranthine bowers,
 And blooming Houries—all are ours.

X.

I love thee, Christian ! Reck not I
 The bar that shuts thee out from this—

But oh ! beyond the cloudless sky
A mosque of other mould there is—
Roofed with the ruby's flashing levin,
And orient with the God of Heaven.

XI.

Fain would I meet thine angel there,
In flames of roseate lustre bright,
While from thy flow of raven hair (3)
Flashed the carbuncle's fitful light :
But Christian ! Omar's mosque and Heaven
Are only to the faithful given.

XII.

Mysterious wanderer ! Darkness still
And clouds upon thy brow I find,
And thoughts which soar, like yonder hill,
To fling long shadows o'er thy mind.
Allah may yet that gloom dispel—
Child of the stranger ! fare thee well.

August, 1837.

THE INEXTINGUISHABLE FIRE;
OR, THE EMBLEM OF THE SCATTERED TRIBES.

On descending from the garden of Gethsemane, I proceeded in a southerly direction to the valley of Jehosaphat. The first object pointed out to me in this excursion, was the pit of Nehemiah, in which, tradition says, the avenger of Israel discovered "the sacred Fire" that had been concealed there during the Babylonish captivity.—*Wilson's Travels*, Vol. I. p. 216.

SWIFT, high, and hoarse, the wild wind grew,
Till rocked and rung each caverned stone ;
Yet gust on gust went harmless through :
Serenely, softly, dimly blue,
That sickly flambeau flickered on.
If fiercer roared the fitful blast,
Or whirled the headlong tempest past,
That flame appeared to grow in might,
And lifted to the roof its light—
Its pale blue light—while to and fro,
Quick, trembling corruscations flow—
Cast on the walls their opal sheen,
And o'er the fretted roof are seen.

REMARKS ON THE CHARACTER AND HISTORY OF SAMSON.

Can this be he,
That heroic, that renown'd
Irresistible Samson ? whom unarm'd
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast, could withstand ;
Who tore the lion as the lion tears the kid.—
Samson Agonistes.

THE Word of God is, like his Providence, often mysterious ; and requires, like his Works, to be profoundly studied, in order to be fully understood. Yet how many are weak enough to be satisfied with only glancing over its surface, and bold enough, after having done so, either to denounce it as absurd, or to reject it as unintelligible !

I am satisfied that not a few individuals, proceeding in this irrational manner, have formed a very false and very dangerous estimate of the character and history of Samson. In his character they see nothing to admire, much to condemn. In his history they detect much that is positively incredible, and more that is hard of belief. In both his character and history, they deem it no difficult matter to find a very strong internal presumption against the credibility of the Scriptures.

First, as to Samson's spiritual state, his heart would appear on the whole to have been "right with God." His strong natural passions and propensities—stronger in him than in his fellow-men—strove against the Spirit of Truth, and too often vexed and resisted it, and gained a

temporary ascendancy. But still that Spirit was present with him to sustain his faith under trial, and his courage when surrounded by danger ; and accordingly St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, mentions Samson among those who through faith “ did many wonderful works,” and “ obtained a good report.” He prayed to God when he was sore athirst, and he died with prayer upon his lips. These were strong marks of faith ; and if any man object that suicide and prayer are incompatible with each other, I have merely to reply, that, if Samson was guilty of the crime of suicide, so is every lover of his country who rushes foremost into battle, or nobly lays down his life in the *forlorn hope*.

In the second place, it cannot be denied that the *history* of Samson savours strongly of the *marvellous*. It is difficult to conceive that a mere man, with any measure of strength, gigantic but still human, could snap asunder, almost without effort, the strongest ligaments ; slaughter, with no other weapon than a bone, a thousand men ; or carry to a distance of more than twenty miles—and that, too, *upwards* into a mountainous country—the ponderous gates and posts of a walled city ;—all this is difficult to conceive on natural principles ; but once admit the element of the *supernatural*, and the marvel, or at least the mystery, vanishes ; and let it be remembered, that in Samson’s history it is not the natural, but the supernatural—not the human, but divine—which produces such wonderful effects.

Lastly, the reader will be disposed to inquire by what right or title Samson, on one occasion, went down to Askelon, and slew thirty Philistines who had never injured him, merely to procure changes of raiment to deliver to those thirty who had ; and, farther, by what authority it was that he maliciously and revengefully burned up their country like a sneaking incendiary, and occasionally went forth like a wild beast, raging and revelling in his strength,

to commit dreadful havoc, as if his sole object had been to display, at a vast sacrifice of human life, the resistlessness of his arm ?

To this I reply, that, altogether apart from his private wrongs—and they were many and grievous to be borne, for Samson had been grossly insulted and maltreated in the house of his friends—altogether apart from these, there are two circumstances which not only palliate or excuse, but amply justify, this part of his conduct. In the first place, the Philistines were at that time lording it over Israel, and weakness alone would have justified a tame acquiescence in their oppressive sovereignty. But let it be observed, in the second place, that a higher duty than mere patriotism justified—nay, imperatively dictated—resistance and retaliation. These Philistines were the lineal descendants of that people whom God, for their sins, and for his own righteous ends, had commanded to be utterly cut off. It was therefore not only a patriotic, it was a solemn, sacred, and religious duty, if possible, to eradicate them utterly as “cumberers of the ground ;” and Samson was endued with his superior strength for the express purpose of withstanding their supremacy.

The circumstance related in the following Poem is a specimen of the treacherous manner in which the Philistines too often treated Samson. To impart to it somewhat of the pleasing air of simplicity of Old Testament History, I have partially thrown it into an olden shape.

The Myddel Medde.

Ane olde but true narratyfe of Judye—Relatyng how Sampeon
paide the trecherouse Philystyns with ther owne coyne.

Fytte I.*

I OFTEN thinke of that shrugge and shrynde,
Whiche brought the olde walles downe,
And buryed deep, in eternalle sleepe,
Al the Philystyns of renowne.

The man who dyd worke that fereful jerke,
Had a brave and a galant breste ;
And prowde he was, to defende the cause
Of the injured and opreste.

Thes were daies when, as legende sayes,
The Philystyns ruled owre lande,
And robbed the riche, nor recked they whiche,
Yf the goulde was in hys hande.

But ane angelle of lyfe appered to the wyfe
Of Manoeh, a sonne of Dan,
And badde her beleve that she wolde conseave,
And give birthe to a mightie man.

And she dyd beleve, and she dyd conseave,
And bare this promised sonne ; [born,
And hys hair was unshorne from the time he was
For a Nazaryte he was one.

* *Fytte* is the word used by our old minstrels for *part* or *division*.
—*Vide Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry.*

And he waxed in strengthe, and he waxed in lengthe,
More than the sonnes of men,
And a lion yonge, though fierce and stronge,
By hys swordless hande was slaine.

But though God had given him strength from heaven,
He vexed the Spirite of Grace ;
For he chose a wyfe, to brede blode and stryfe,
Of an uncircumcysed race.

And then it befelle—moste strange to telle !
As he wente that wyfe to wed,
That he founde a hyve of bees alive,
In the harte of the lion dead.

And he tooke and dyd eate of the honeye sweete,
But no one he wolde telle
From whence it came, for he kepte the same
For ane use whiche he knewe fulle well.

Ane use prevailed, which never failed
To be kepte in those simple times,
That ere one daie ceased of the wedding feaste,
Ryddelnes were geven in rimes.

Soe Sampson saide—“ Your ryddelnes I’ve redde ;
Nowe will ye rede me mine—
Out of that whiche dyd eate, I tooke forth meate ;
Out of that whiche was stronge, I tooke what was
My ryddel can ye devyne ? [sweete :

“ Ye are twice fyfteeene, and ye must have seene,
That I, who am onely one,
Have lytell in store, and can borrow noe more,
Yet this shal be honestleye done—

“ Yf my ryddel ye rede in very deede,
Ere the seven daies’ feaste hase passed,
I shal geve to all, whate’er befalla,
Though the gyfte shoulde be my last—

—“ I shal geve to all, whate’er befalle,
A change of rayment goode,
And a sheete to boot, whiche well might suite
A couch of cedar-woode.

“ But this you must do, lyk goode men and trew,
If you faile, I must have in my turne,
A symilar two from ich one of you,
Newe-woven and unworne.”

fptte 33E.

So they all agreed, and tryed to rede
Hys ryddel upon the spot;
But three daies passed, and dawned the last,
And still they guessed yt not.

Then on that daie they all dyd saye,
Like false and dastarde men,
We'll get hys wyfe to fret hys lyfe,
And he shall telle it then.

So doune they wente, to Timnath bente,
And hys wyfe they made to saye,
That she would doe whate'er she knew
To make hym telle that daie.

And then with wyles, and teares, and smiles,
She plyed her artfull trade,
And more and more she vexed hym sore,
Until at lengthe he sayde—

“ I have not tolde my father olde,
Nor tolde my mother deare,
And shal my wyfe brede dole and stryfe
To marre owre weddinge cheere ?”

But that she dyd, till her eyes were red,
And her face was all in flame :
For suche a wyfe wolde lose her lyfe,
Ere she wolde lose her aim.

Till tired at last, and plyed so faste,
With so muche stryfe and sounde,
He tolde her plaine of the lion slaine,
And the honeye whiche he had founde.

Full well he knewe, that he wolde rue
The houre he was so free ;
But yf you woo, what can you doe,
Yf you wolde e'er agree.

And nowe the sun, so duske and dun,
Had well nighe kissed the bryne,
But lingeringe still, on the easterne hill,
Hys crimsone face did shine.

Another houre, and night shall loure,
And the vespere-starre looke out,
And the lion's howle shall freight the owle,
And the jackalle prowle about.

But yet that face so full of grace—
That greate red orbe of lighte—
Although you trace its course apace
Doune to the couch of nighte,

Is lingeringe still, and on yondere hill
 It looks as lothe to parte,
 For the glimeringe rockes, and the bleatinge flocks,
 Do almoste melt the harte.

And the ryddel, I sayde, was still unredde—
 But who are thes that wende,
 All out of breath, as yf lyfe or death
 Dyd on their speede depende ?

Thes are the men returned again,
 Who doune to Timnath wente,
 And ere the sun his course hase run,
 To Sampson they are bente.

And hym they fynde, agreaved in mynde
 To prove his strengthe so weake ;
 And when they meete, and firste do greeete,
 Then one of them doth speak—

“ What is so stronge as a lion yonge ?—
 Your ryddel we do expound—
 What is soe sweete, or goode to eate,
 As honeye newlye founde ? ”

“ My ryddel ye’ve redde ”—then Sampson sayde,
 “ But be not therefore proude ;
 For welle I knowe ye had ne’er done soe,
 Had ye not with my hefer plowed.”

In wrath he spake, and awaye he brake,
 For hys yre was kindled then ;
 And he hath gone to Askelone,
 And there slaine thirty men.

Then backe he turned, while his wrath yet burned,
And to ich hys worde made goode ;
But they colde not bear those clothes to weare,
In ther kinsmen's blood imbrewed.

A VESPER-MELODY.

[The writer is supposed to be off the coast of Syria, immediately over against that point where the bold promontory of Mount Carmel advances into the Mediterranean.]

I.

BRIGHT Soldaun of day ! to thy pillow of rest
Thou art sinking away, o'er the waves of the west,
And touched with thy beam, the Egean waves gleam,
And like fire-flakes they seem, on her billowy breast.

II.

Away, oh away—for the night-breeze is high,
And the twilight steals gray o'er the eastern sky,
And this is the hour when, in tamarind-bower,
The night-loving flower may unfold her dark eye.

III.

Away, oh away—for, on Carmel afar,
I can mark the bright ray of the vesper-star,
And the Carmelite's song, sad, solemn, and strong,
Sweeps wildly along, like the murmur of war.

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.

Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.—*1 Kings*, xviii, 38, 39.

I.

I STAND on Carmel's furrowed brow,
As I have stood on loftier hills,
While raged a cloud of storms below,
And leaped an avalanche of rills,
From the far point on which I stood,
Down the deep waste of rock and wood.

II.

God of my fathers! thou hast shed
A strange and a mysterious blight,
Where the blaspheming prophets bled,
And where, amid the gloom of night,
Blazed the bright censer-brand to Heaven,
And smoked the gifts to Baal given.

III.

On Carmel waved the defile-tree,
And breathed the fragrant mannah-flowers,
When, in a mantle fraught of THEE,
With inspiration's hallowing powers,
Elijah stood exultant here,
And bade the recreant scoffers fear.

IV.

Swiftly the winged hours flew by,
And Bäl stood aloof the while :
Though scorn was in the prophet's eye,
And on the prophet's lip a smile,
Loud was the vaunted voice of prayer ;
But still no fire from Heaven was there.

V.

Then wrath was seen on Israel's brow,
And swept in murmurings thro' the crowd,
And vengeance breathed her whispered vow,
Or spoke in accents fierce and loud,
And talked of death, and called for flames,
And told her victims by their names.

VI.

Elijah rose—he waved his hand,
And bade the furious hosts be still ;
For, countless as the desert-sand,
By Kishon's brook and Carmel's hill
Stood the assembled myriads near,
And gazed upon the aged seer.

VII.

But O how calm that cheek and eye !
He knew on whom his faith was staid—
On Him who will not—cannot lie ;
And who whatever he hath said
Will work, in his own time and way,
For faith that does not blush to pray.

VIII.

“ Approach,” he said, “ and mark the power,
Which these idolaters deride—

Approach, and let the present hour
 For Baal or for God decide—
 Rebuild Jehovah's broken shrine,
 And mark with your own eyes the sign.

IX.

“ For every tribe, a separate stone,
 Go, pile upon that hallowed spot ;
 And let a heifer, placed thereon,
 Be drenched with water quickly brought ;
 And then—let God himself declare,
 In answer to the voice of prayer.”

X.

With eager haste the work was done,
 And floods of water poured around,
 Till o'er the trench they saw it run,
 And deluge with its streams the ground :
 Then kneeling—separate from the crowd—
 The aged prophet cried aloud—

XI.

“ God of our fathers ! Jacob's God !
 Descend and manifest thy face,
 And touch with thy converting rod
 The hearts of this apostate race :
 Descend, and let a sign be shewn
 That Thou art God, and Thou alone.”

XII.

He spake, and scarce the words had said,
 When downward, like a tempest driven,
 A fiery whirlwind flashing red,
 Came scouring from the vault of Heaven—
 With spiral meteors swept the ground,
 And spread dismay and horror round.

XIII.

But not a withered leaf it charred :
It passed, nor left behind a trace—
Until its lightning foot was heard,
Trampling upon the holy place.
They looked, but not a wreck was seen
Where sacrifice and shrine had been.

XIV.

The trench was dry : the very bones,
The wood, the victim—where were they ?
Even the hard and flinty stones,
Like a night-dream, had passed away.
Nothing remained the tale to tell :
The fire had done its work full well.

XV.

Then sudden, where the people stood,
A shout of wonder burst on high,
And each of that vast multitude
With loud acclaim was heard to cry—
“ The Lord is God—and none but He
The God of Jacob’s race shall be ! ”

XVI.

Then rushing on, with weapons bare,
And sparkling eye, and foaming rage,
They dragged their prophets by the hair
Down to Kishon’s grassy edge ;
And there, the thirsty sword they drew,
And slaughtered the accursed crew.

ICHABOD;

OR,

THE SHADE OF JUDAH.

I.

HATH the sun risen ? Gleams o'er Olivet
The opening blushes of an eastern sky ?
Or canst thou mark a fiery radiance yet, (4)
Where the Sidonian crypts in ruins lie ?
Accursed fanes ! polluted altars ! High
On that fair mountain's rocky brow they stand ;
And often there, as in deep mockery,
The sun, emerging from Deguisi's strand, (5) [brand.
Seems on these mouldering fanes a blazing censor-

II.

But yet he shines not : other rays are here,
And soft and shadowy visions cluster round ;
And marble mosques and minarets appear,
Like rich mosaic wrought along the ground ;
While, wrapped in many shadows, vast, profound,
The vale of buried kings lies far below ; (6)
And there, pale ghosts with drooping cypress crowned
Wake from their tombs, and with a shriek of woe
Contemplate Zion's gloom, and Kedron's scanty flow.

III.

Yes, shade of Judah ! thou may'st weep and wail ;
Go, hire thy mourners as thou didst of old ; (7)

For, swift and solemn through Gehinnom's vale
 The Jordan of a thousand years hath rolled ; *
 And Salem's marble towers, and shrines of gold,
 Buried like Sodom's in a fiery grave, †
 Are ashes now ; while over all, behold—
 It is as if a Dead Sea rolled its wave ; [trave.
 For time's green mould hath grown on plinth and archi-

IV.

True, by the star-light, wrapt in cypress-gloom
 One gorgeous temple thou may'st yet descry ;
 "And yon," a deep voice mutters from the tomb—
 "Yon is yet left of Israel's majesty."
 Alas ! so visions mock the wanderer's eye, (8)
 Where Almotanak heaves his sulph'ry tide—
 Pagodas rise, and columns pierce the sky,
 And palaces are piled on every side—
 Onward the traveller moves—away those visions glide.

V.

Even thus yon temple, like a faëry vision,
 Towering in triumph where thine own should be,
 Is reared, pale shade ! in mockery and derision
 Of that which erst was so beloved of thee.
 Gaze on its splendour : o'er its summit see
 The prophet's crescent ; while his gonfalon
 Bends in the night-breeze like a labouring tree.
 Tell me, proud Spirit ! hath the vision gone ?
 Or still appears yon temple glorious as thine own ?

* Not midst those aisles, thro' which a thousand years,
 Mutely as clouds, and reverently had swept.

Forest Sanctuary, I. 80.

† Jerusalem, as the reader is aware, was literally burned to the ground ; and may we not say, that, as in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, it was with *fire from Heaven* ?

REMARKS ON THE CHARACTER OF DAVID.

THOUGH no character is more prominently brought forward in the Sacred Writings, perhaps there is none which is so little understood, or which has given occasion to so much cavil and misapprehension, as that of David. A distinguished type and progenitor of the Messiah, and expressly declared in the inspired record to be *a man after God's own heart*, this illustrious individual, at once a monarch and a poet, comes down to the present age recommended by a species and by a force of authority, which no professing Christian, who has any regard for his consistency or his creed, will dare *openly* to dispute. At the same time I have often remarked, that there exists, even among current orthodox believers, many who consider the Scriptural eulogiums on this man as excessive, extravagant, and unmerited, and his claim to the character of a saint to be at least questionable. Nay, I have known one sincere, I may say austere Christian, whose very puritanism rebelled against his faith and his better judgment, and who hesitated not, with a tone and manner as emphatic as his language was strong, to pronounce David *a villain*. The stern uncompromising hostility to treachery and illicit gratification which prompted this severe language, demands, if not our respect, at least our charitable forbearance; but for my own part I can truly say, that the longer I contemplate the character of King David, as it shines forth in his adventurous life, the more

entirely do I feel convinced, that he was *on the whole* not only an exemplary saint, but, to speak in general and comprehensive terms, *a good man*.

The strength of his passions did indeed, particularly on one occasion, betray him into aggravated criminality ; but surely it is not only uncharitable—it is altogether unjust, to form our estimate of a man's general character, from one or two reprehensible but isolated actions. David sinned, and sinned deeply, in the matter of Bathsheba ; but he suffered for his guilt, and the fifty-first psalm, poured forth to God in the hour of agony and remorse, is a gratifying record at once of his penitence and of his piety.

Contrary to the usual practice of the world, let us weigh against this one criminal action the general tenor of King David's life, and I venture to affirm, that we shall find it difficult, if not utterly impossible, to produce from history the instance of a single individual, who combines and exhibits through the whole of a diversified career, so many amiable qualities and shining virtues. This wonderful man, from the humble station of a shepherd, was exalted to a throne ; and who—allowing for the circumstances of the age and for the strong impulses of passion, attentively reviewing the whole history of David—his attachment to Jonathan—an attachment which was reciprocated—his forbearance towards Saul, which made even that haughty and hardened spirit shed tears of shame and of conscious inferiority—his commanding and continued influence over all his associates—an influence which nothing could so long have maintained, but the respect extorted by the energies of his mind, and the amiable qualities of his heart—the deep-rooted place which to his dying day he held in the affections of that fickle people, who had crowned him with acclamation—his steadfast, elevated, and fervent piety, poured forth, not only in public and in

the face of day, but in the privacy of his closet and in the night-season, in the language of tears, and in the language of exultant confidence—who, that considers all this, and remembers at the same time the obscurity and humbleness of his origin—the demoralizing tendencies of a life of battle—the unscrupulous character of many of his associates and fellow-warriors, the influence of whose example he withstood, and the recklessness of whose spirit he overawed—who, I say, that carefully considers and ponders all this, shall dare deliberately to affirm that King David was not a good and a great man?

The circumstance recorded in the following Poem, exhibits David in an amiable light, and in his true character—that of a man whose heart, whatever might be his failings, his errors, or his crimes, was in the right place. The incident is instructive, not only as illustrating the character of the man himself, but as furnishing a striking proof of the zealous and disinterested attachment, with which the amiable and endearing qualities of his heart had inspired his followers.

KING DAVID'S LIBATION;

OR, FRIENDSHIP'S OFFERING.

And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men, &c.—2 *Sam.* xxiii, 15, &c.

L

KING DAVID stood in a lonely wood,
By the mouth of Adullam's grot;

And the Philistines lay on watch that day,
And they moved not from the spot :
In Rephaim's vale they had pitched their tent,
And to Bethlehem some of their troops had sent.

II.

And then it was that King David said—
For his throat was parched and sear—
“ I want not wine, I want not bread,
But would I could send some household maid
To bring me a draught from the fountain-head,
Which gushes up cold and clear,
Where the Philistine warriors watch and wait
At the bank of stone near Bethlehem's gate.”

III.

This was half-muttered, half-uttered aloud—
For he meant it to meet no ear ;
But three of his warriors, apart from the crowd,
Who chanced to be near and did overhear,
Said each to the other, and solemnly vowed,
That bring they would, if bring they could,
That water cold and clear ;
For they loved their lives, but loyalty first,
And their blood they would give to quench the thirst
Of one whom they held so dear.

IV.

So away they sped with a stealthy tread,
And none their steps did mark—
For they threaded the wood as well as they could,
And the night was hot and dark—
Till at length they reached the Philistines' camp,
And heard the sentinel's solemn tramp.

V.

But they passed unknown till they reached the stone,
 And the water so clear and cold ;
 And the pitcher they sank into the deep tank—
 But there was not one of the three who drank,
 Though they stood athirst on the tempting bank,
 Till they filled their flagon of gold ;
 And then they sat on the bank all still,
 And out of the pitcher so clear and chill
 Each man did quaff his fill.

VI.

Then back they sped with a stealthy tread,
 Returning the way they came ;
 And none did mark, for the night was dark,
 Till the foot of the foremost struck a spark
 From a low and smouldering flame—
 When suddenly, hark ! a dog did bark—
 And they saw they had lost their aim,
 To pass unkent : so they drew their swords,
 And rushed along through the sleeping hordes.

VII.

But they slept no more, for a swift alarm
 Had passed from tent to tent ;
 And each of the Philistines, fearing harm,
 On instant flight was bent—
 When, sudden, a voice cried—“ Only three !
 Comrades, you do not mean to flee ! ”

VIII.

Then on the crowd rush, like a river’s gush,
 And clashing sabres sound :
 On, on they flow, but at every blow
 A Philistine bites the ground—

For these are three of the thirty men
Who never yet struck a blow in vain.

IX.

Headlong but calm they hew their way,
And whom they strike at once they slay,
For this is not the first affray

Where these brave men have been.
What ! have you then forgot the day
When ranks of flesh were chilled to clay,
Where the thirty men in ambush lay,
And feats of blood were seen,
Which Israel has not yet forgot ?
For that same blood yet marks the spot,
And cloven, shattered skulls yet rot,
And the grass it grows so green.

X.

Still on they press, and their foes grow less,
For whom they slay not, flee—
A coward in the dark may miss his mark,
But flight he thinks is sure and free
When none is there to see.

XI.

And thus they passed, till they reached at last
The end of the woody swamp : [back
They had made a track, which they could have traced
Half-way, at least, through the Philistines' camp ;
But their homeward path, though dark, was clear
Of cowards and dead men late so rife,
And they yearned their comrades hearts to cheer,
Who had heard the distant strife ;
And glad all were when they heard the tale,
And saw them back all safe and hale,
With the water, and—their life.

XII.

But David the King, while tears of joy
Did trickle down his face,
Yielding him bliss without alloy,
Pressed them in his embrace :
Then, taking in his hand the bowl,
He poured upon the ground the whole,
While, speaking from his inmost soul,
He said, in accents deep—
“ My friends ! O, do not, do not think
That I the very blood can drink
Of those who never yet did shrink
Their vigils thus to keep,
By day or night, on the field of fight,
To yield their Monarch sleep.
What ! shall I sleep, while you must weep,
Or seek my comfort or my ease,
Or my weak appetites to please,
At such a cost as THIS ?
No, no—this is a *holy thing* :
I pour it out as an offering,
Worthy of HIM who is MY KING—
And you, MY FRIENDS, I bless.”

November 23, 1844.

SOLOMON AND THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

THE following rabbinical story, whether true or fabulous, is related, I believe, in the *Talmud* or *Gemara*, and possessed such attractions for the author in very early life, that his gratitude has prompted him to throw it into the following form.

HIGH on his throne, the royal sage,
Taught by his God and not by age,
In kingly pomp, and youthful glow,
Sat talking with his court below.
He spoke of things in Heaven and earth—
Of pleasures vain and heartless mirth,
And wisdom's charms and wisdom's worth ;
And all his sages, standing round,
Harkened with reverence profound,
And wondered much to hear from youth
More wisdom, eloquence, and truth,
Than they had drawn from hoary hair,
And much experience and care—
For still their monarch walked with God,
Upon the strait and narrow road.

But while he sat thus breathing round
That wisdom which in God he found,
A queenly woman op'd the door,
And stood upon the marble floor—

Stately in figure, and each grace
Bright-beaming in her noble face.
A wreath of flowers in either hand,
Before the throne she took her stand,
In neat but modest guise arrayed ;
And thus to Solomon she said :—

“ Great king ! thy fame is far and near ;
And all I see, and all I hear,
Since I have come from Sheba’s shore,
Persuades me of it more and more ;
But now I wish—excuse the jest—
To put thy wisdom to the test.
Behold ! in either hand I bear
A flowery chaplet fresh and fair—
So fair and fresh, that one might deem
They both were truly what they seem ;
And one there is—but one alone—
Which in the garden-bed hath grown :
The other is the work of art :
Pray tell me *which*, ere I depart
To bear the glory of thy name
To the far land from whence I came ;
For if thou canst, I then shall see
There is no wiser man than thee.”

The monarch sat, but nothing said :
He looked upon the artful maid,
And then he looked upon the flowers,
And wished himself in his palace-bowers—
For who, so far away as he,
Could e’er unfold this mystery ?

He looked, and knit his brow and gazed,
And then his brow again he raised,

As if some sudden thought had passed,
But still was puzzled at the last—
For which was true, and which was glazed,
He could not tell—though long he gazed.

At length he turned him to his court,
And said—“ This is but woman’s sport,
And yet it teaches wisdom too,
For that small trifles oft will do.
The moral by this trifle taught
Is deep humility of thought.
Ye all are sages—Can ye tell,
Without the use of touch or smell,
Which of these tiny wreaths of flowers
Is brought from Nature’s fragrant bowers;
Or which of them is nothing more
Than shreds of paper painted o’er.”

The aged Rabbies, one by one,
Looked hard as he himself had done;
But not a Rabbi, standing there,
To answer Solomon would dare:
For though they looked till almost blind,
They still felt doubtful in their mind;
And wondered not, that even he
Failed to explain the mystery:
Though sore it grieved them at the heart,
That thus, by a weak woman’s art,
Their monarch’s wisdom and their own
Were both outwitted and outshone.

At length, the sovereign—gazing round
As in a reverie profound—
Appeared impressed with sudden thought,
As if some recollection brought

Relief and comfort to his mind,
And he bade them ope a damask blind,
Which hung before a window, crowned
With honeysuckle clustering round.
The curtain then was drawn aside,
And thus the window opened wide,
When, suddenly, there filled the room
The honeysuckle's sweet perfume,
And, wafted on the summer-breeze,
There came a swarm of wandering bees,
Which hovered for a moment round,
As seeking what could not be found—
Till suddenly a cluster fell
Upon the flowers they knew full well ;
And though there were two wreaths—all came,
And swarmed, and settled on the same.

The Rabbies shook their beards with joy,
And wondered that a beardless boy,
With less of beard, had more of sense,
Wisdom, and wit, and eloquence,
Than a whole court of bearded men,
As had been fairly proven then ;
While now the Queen of Sheba knew,
That all she heard of him was true ;
And went, amazed, to spread his fame
In the far land from whence she came.

November 23d, 1844.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SECOND TEMPLE.

SPEAKING of this remarkably literal fulfilment of prophecy, Principal Hill says—"The manner in which the days were shortened is most striking. Vespasian committed the conduct of the siege to Titus, then a young man, impatient of resistance, jealous of the honour of the Roman army, and in haste to return from the conquest of an obscure province to the capital of the empire. He prosecuted the siege with vigour; he invited the besieged to yield, by offering them peace; and he tried to intimidate them, by using, contrary to his nature, every species of cruelty against those who fell into his hands. But all his vigour, and all his arts, would have been in vain, had it not been for the madness of those within. They fought with one another; they burned, in their fury, magazines of provisions sufficient to last them for years; and they deserted with a foolish confidence strong-holds out of which no enemy could have dragged them. After they had thus delivered their city into his hands, Titus, when he was viewing it, said, 'God has been upon our side. Neither the hands nor the machines of men could have been of any avail against those towers. But God has pulled the Jews out of them, that he might give them to us.' It was impossible for Titus to restrain the soldiers, irritated by an obstinate resistance, from executing their

fury against the besieged. But his native clemency spared the Jews in other places. He would not allow the senate of Antioch, that city in which the disciples were first called Christians, to expel the Jews; for where, said he, shall these people go, now that we have destroyed their city? Titus was the servant of God to execute his vengeance on Jerusalem. But when the measure of that vengeance was fulfilled, the compassion of this amiable prince was employed to restrain the wrath of man. 'The Lord shortened the days.'

Elsewhere, the same writer says—“The great temple, which Soloman had built, was destroyed at the time of the Babylonish captivity. Cyrus permitted the two tribes who returned to Judea, to rebuild the house of their God. And this second temple was repaired and adorned by Herod the Great, who, having received the crown of Judea from the Romans, thought that the most effectual way of overcoming the prejudices, and obtaining the favour of the Jewish people, was by beautifying and enlarging, after the plan of Solomon's Temple, the building which had been hastily erected in the reigns of Cyrus and Darius. It was still accounted the second temple, but was so much improved by the reparation which Herod made, that both Josephus and the Roman historians celebrate the extent, the beauty, and the splendour of the building. And Josephus mentions, in particular, marble stones of a stupendous size in the foundation, and in different parts of the building. The disciples, we may suppose, point out these stones, lamenting the destruction of such a fabric; or perhaps meaning to insinuate, that it would not be easy for the hand of man to destroy it. But Jesus answered, 'Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' It is a proverbial saying, marking the complete destruction of the temple; and there would not,

according to the general analogy of language, have been any impropriety in the use of it, if the temple had been rendered unfit for being a place of worship, although piles of stones had been left standing in the court. But, by the providence of God, even this proverbial expression was fulfilled, according to the literal acceptation of the words. Titus was most solicitous to preserve so splendid a monument of the victories of Rome ; and he sent a message to the Jews who had enclosed themselves in the temple, that he was determined to save it from ruin. But they could not bear that the house of their God, the pride and glory of their nation, should fall into the hands of the heathen, and they set fire to the porticoes. A soldier, observing the flames, threw a burning brand in at the window ; and others, incensed at the obstinate resistance of the Jews, without regard to the commands or threatenings of their general, who ran to extinguish the flames, continued to set fire to different parts of it, and at length even to the doors of the holy place. 'And thus,' says Josephus, 'the temple was burnt to the ground against the will of Titus.' After it was in this way rendered useless, he ordered the foundations, probably on account of the unusual size of the stones, to be dug up. And Rufus, who commanded the army after his departure, executed this order, by tearing them up with a ploughshare ; so truly did Micah say of old, ' Zion shall be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.' "*

I may likewise quote the following passage—" Three hundred years after the death of our Saviour, Constantine, the first Roman emperor who embraced Christianity, built many splendid Christian churches in this Roman colony, and dispersed the Jews who attempted to disturb

* Hill's *Lectures*, B. I. cap. vii.

the Christians in their worship. Within thirty years after the death of Constantine, the Emperor Julian, who is known by the name of the Apostate, because, although he had been bred a Christian, he became a heathen, out of hatred to the Christians, and with a view to defeat the prophecy (of our Saviour), invited the body of the Jewish people scattered through the empire to return to their city; and professing to lament the oppression which they had endured, gave orders for rebuilding their temple. His lieutenants did begin. But, says the Roman historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, whose respectable authority there is no reason in this instance to question, balls of fire bursting forth near the foundation made it impossible for the workmen to approach the place, and the enterprise was laid aside.”*

I have merely to observe farther, that this magnificent structure, perhaps indeed rarely surpassed in extent and architectural grandeur, was erected on Mount Moriah, on a solid basis of very hard rock. Occupying this elevated position, it was of course a prominent and imposing object—the stones being white marble, and averaging “25 cubits in length, 12 in height, and 9 in breadth—all polished and exceedingly beautiful.” The piazzas and court were paved with marble. The roof and portions of the wall being covered externally with gold, presented in sunshine a very gorgeous appearance. The entire enclosure occupied by the temple, its courts, and galleries, was not less than a furlong square, and was completely surrounded by a lofty and massive wall, of which some of the stones were more than 40 cubits in length. The wall on the eastern side, springing perpendicularly upwards from the bottom of the adjacent valley of Jehosaphat, must have been at least 400 cubits high. Viewed from Mount Oli-

* *Hill's Lectures*, B. I. cap. vii.

vet, which occupied the opposite side of the same valley, the temple, with its tall pillars of white marble, and its glittering roof and pinnacles, must have exhibited a superb appearance.

And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.—*Math. xxiv, 2.*

I.

“We have triumphed”—said Titus in glory and pride—
“Jerusalem is fallen a prey to our sword;
For the gods have been fighting with fate on our side,
And Jerusalem is fallen—but hark to my word:

II.

“Yon temple which gleams in the rays of the sun,
Like a mountain of marble so massive and tall,
Shall stand to record the proud deeds we have done,
But the city around it—I doom it to fall.

III.

“Go forth then and pillage. Man, woman, and child,
Ye shall cleave with the sabre, or pierce with the spear,
And the city itself shall in ruins be piled,
But the temple ye touch not—remember and fear.”

IV.

They heard, and like tigers which pant for their prey,
Or the arrow’s career on the wings of the wind,
The spoilers go forth on that terrible day,
And death hovers o’er them, and vultures behind.

V.

And the sun shines effulgent on mountain and shore,
 But never a beam on that city doth fall—
 For a thick cloud of smoke spreads its canopy o'er,
 And the flames have a banquet on house and on hall.

VI.

And the palaces blaze, and the windows they gleam
 As if feasting and rioting revelled within ;
 And with metals all molten the gutters they stream,
 And the lead it pours down with loud plashing and din.

VII.

And the pavements are rent, and the houses are blent
 In masses of ruin all dingy and black,
 And the fire it rolls on as if ne'er to be spent,
 And the veering wind turns it hither and back.

VIII.

For He is above, who, in dark Galilee,
 O'er the wind-driven waves, like a night-spirit, came ;
 And, as erst he did walk on that billowy sea,
 He now rides on a tempest of smoke and of flame.

IX.

For "*Vengeance is mine*" are the words and the doom
 Of him who his head in deep sorrow did bow,
 When he wept to foresee, through a future of gloom,
 That doom which his justice must execute now.

X.

But where is that people, who cried in their pride—
 "*His blood be on us and our children for ever?*"
 Ha ! ha ! for that blood has come down in full tide,
 And in vain they now cry—" *Is there none to deliver ?*"

XI.

No, no—there is none. Your doom it is doomed—
Your fate, it is fated—the words have been passed;
And one jot or one tittle can ne'er be resumed,
Till all be fulfilled from the first to the last.

XII.

Go on then, ye spoilers! 'Tis Heaven who says—
“ Because I have called, and ye answered me never;
Because in vain warning my voice I did raise,
'Tis therefore that now—*there is none to deliver*:

XIII.

“ 'Tis therefore that now ye are pillaged and slain—
Your city in ashes—your pride in the dust:
'Tis therefore that now ye implore me in vain—
Ye invoked your own doom, and receive it ye must.”

XIV.

Go on then, ye spoilers! Shew mercy to those
Whose fathers showed mercy—if such can be found—
When the crowd, like a tempest, in fury arose,
And “ *Crucify, Crucify*,” echoed around.

XV.

But see—the long streets are all slimy with blood,
Which bubbles and boils with the heat of the stones,
And it rushes and reeks like the spray of a flood,
And it carries along with it entrails and bones:

XVI.

And the sootflakes they whirl, and dash to and fro,
With the eddying gusts of the wind and the smoke,
Like the drifting of black and unnatural snow, [the oak.
When the night-tempest howls through the shrouds of

XVII.

And dismay and confusion are scattered around, [gloom,
 And like spectres they flit through the smoke and the
 And the roofs and the rafters all crash to the ground,
 And the victims lie buried to roast in their tomb.

XVIII.

Jerusalem is dead—like a corn-field laid
 With a tempest of fire, or the lashing of hail—
 And the words are fulfilled, which th' Omnipotent said,
 For the *Mount of her Glory is thrashed with the flail.*

XIX.

No—still on yon hill, like a vision of light,
 The towers of her temple are piercing the sky,
 Like a meteor bright, in the dark cloud of night—
 But hark, there is heard a loud clamour and cry.

XX.

And thither the crowds, not in phalanx or file,
 But all mingled, and blended, and blackened with smoke,
 Roll on till they reach the magnificent pile,
 Constructed of marble, and rooted in rock.

XXI.

For thither a remnant, escaped from the sword,
 Had fled in that stronghold a refuge to seek;
 And there they believed, that the arm of the Lord
 Would be bared on their spoilers, hot vengeance to wreak.

XXII.

But on the crowd came, and with might and with main
 The battering-ram thundered at gate and at wall,
 And a rampart they reared of the trampled and slain,
 And the temple was doomed like the city to fall,

XXIII.

When Titus appeared on a charger of black,
And it neighed and it champed as it snuffed up the air,
And the crowds were abashed and rolled fearfully back,
As he galloped full onward, and bade them forbear.

XXIV.

Then waving his hand, till the multitudes round
Were awed into silence as still as the grave,
His courser he spurred till she sprang on a mound,
And then to the Hebrews these terms he gave :—

XXV.

“ Ye doomed of the gods ! it is meet to despair,
When your kin and your country are low in the dust :
Though courage I love, there’s a time to forbear—
Come down and surrender : my clemency trust.

XXVI.

“ Your lives I will grant—I will send you away
To a stronghold of safety, or distant or near :
By the word of a Roman, which cannot betray,
Surrender—and ye shall have nothing to fear.

XXVII.

“ But if ye resist in your madness of hate,
Ye have seen what the sword and the eagle can do :
I will take you, and torture you early and late—
My threat and my promise are equally true.”

XXVIII.

He said—but there came from a window afar
A dart which went hot to the heart of his steed,
And it sprang from the mound, and again the loud war
Rolled on more enraged at that treacherous deed.

XXIX.

And again the crowd came, and with might and with main
 The engines they thundered at wall and at gate ;
 And they hurled from the rampart of trampled and slain
 The missiles of death, and *the arrows of fate*.

XXX.

But still the brave Titus conjured them to spare
 A structure so noble, their prowess to tell—
 When, sudden, they marked a fierce flash in the air,
 And one of the porticoes crashingly fell.

XXXI.

Then a soldier exclaimed—“ They have kindled the pile ;
 They themselves are resolved in its ruins to die :
 Let us help them to burn—for I cannot but smile,
 When I see how absurdly to do so they try.

XXXII.

“ I can do it much better ”—he said as he tossed
 A brand all in flame through a window within ;
 But he lived not so long as to rue the proud boast,
 For Titus in wrath clove him down to the chin.

XXXIII.

“ *Extinguish the flames !* ” he then shouted aloud—
 But madness and mirth had laid hold of his troops,
 And a volley of burning-brands hissed in a crowd, [loops.
 As they entered the windows and glanced through the

XXXIV.

And soon the vast pile, with its roof all of gold,
 Was roaring in flame, a more glorious sight
 Than e'en when the Shechinah crowned it of old ;
 For to human eye never shone temple so bright.

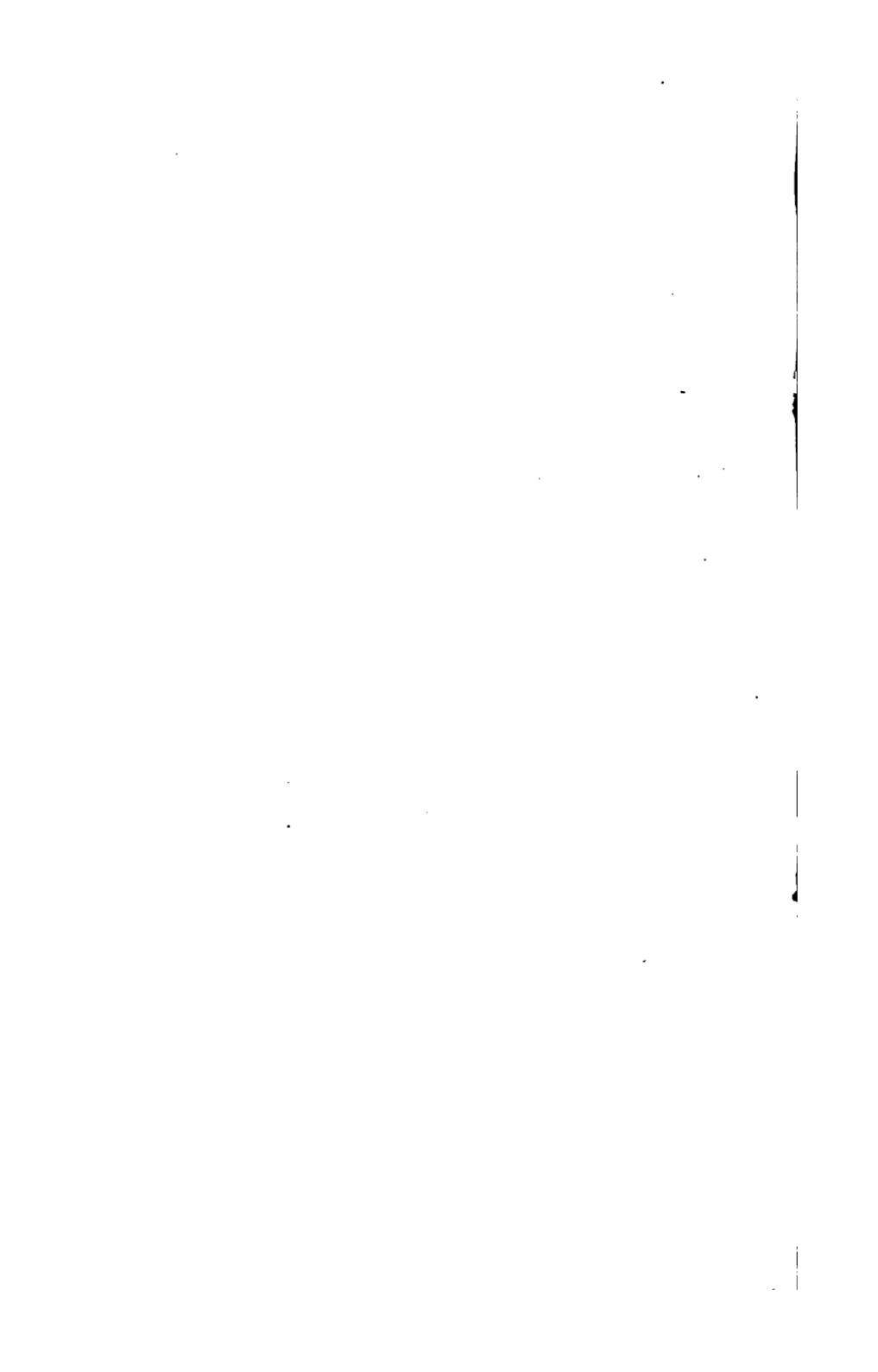
XXXV.

And the legions recoiled at the deed they had done,
As a vast cone of flame rose invisibly high ;
And the black smoke enveloped the western sun,
And covered with sackcloth the western sky.

XXXVI.

And over Mount Calvary—mass upon mass—
It careered, as it seemed to look down, and to say—
“ Thy words, God Omnipotent, are now come to pass :
There remains not one stone on another this day.”

November 27, 1844.



P A R T IV.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

Within my breast there is no light,
But the cold light of stars :
I give the first watch of the night
To the red planet Mars.

The star of the unconquered will—
He rises in my breast,
Serene, and resolute, and still,
And calm, and self-possessed.

And thou, too, whosoe'er thou art,
That readest this brief psalm,
As one by one thy hopes depart,
Be resolute and calm.

O fear not, in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long—
Know how sublime a thing it is,
To suffer and be strong.

Longfellow.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE RETURNED MISSIONARY.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.—*John xiv, 27.*

I.

He comes from a far distant strand—
His looks all pale and wan—
He hails again his father-land,
A feeble, wasted man.
The light of health hath left his eye—
His frame is spent with toil;
And he hath but returned to die
Upon his native soil.

II.

For he hath been in warfare long,
And nobly hath he striven,
Associate with the fearless throng
Who fight the wars of Heaven—

Bearing the banner of the Cross
O'er Satan's dark domain,
And counting all the world but loss
For what he strove to gain.

III.

True, *his* hath been a bloodless field,
For JESUS was his Lord ;
Peace was engraven on his shield—
The *Bible* was his sword :
No human victory he sought—
No bloody fame to win ;
Nor yet with carnal weapons fought
Against the man of sin.

IV.

But much hath he in danger been,
Beneath a scorching sun ;
Nor scarless hath he left the scene,
Nor easy laurels won.
Languidly beats the pulse of life,
Which throbbed so high before,
When, burning for the holy strife,
He left his native shore.

V.

Yet weep not for this Christian knight,
As if 'twere his to feel,
On his return, the withering blight
Of disappointed zeal ;
For though his arm is feeble now,
And drooping is his crest,
He bears proud laurels on his brow,
And PEACE within his breast.

THE MOON.

THE fairest thing in nature is the Moon,
 Seen through the tracery of a leafy tree,
On a mild evening in the month of June,
 After the sun has kissed the western sea.
Oft have I seen her thus—and rapturously
 Have I prolonged my gaze as in a dream,
'Mid some deep sylvan solitude ; while she
 Walked on from branch to branch, and there did seem
Some undulating light seen reflex in a stream.

VERNAL THUNDER.

HARK—the glad sound ! It is the funeral knell
Of passing winter. 'Tis the awful peal
Wherewith tired Nature bursts the icy spell
Which some arch-necromancer had suspended
O'er the wild mountains of my native isle.
Yea, roll again, kind thunder ! That salute
Was fired from Heaven's dread artillery,
To welcome the young Spring. It was the drum
Which sounded her *réveillée* o'er the hills—
Rolling right merrily to muster forth
A long array of laughing Summer months.

The tidings are most welcome. Weeks have passed
Since the glad songster of the budding grove
Did pipe them lustily at break of morn :

The west wind whispered them : the snow-fed rill,
In glee and joyaunce, murmured them aloud :
The changing cloudlets, like a telegraph,
Proclaimed all silently the coming Spring ;
And silently the opening of the bud
Took up the theme, and carried it along
Through the dark windings of the pathless wood.

But, hark !—No longer may the joy of Nature
Breathe itself forth in whispers. The loud storm
Is deepening, and the firmament
Assumes a darker scowl. Impenetrable gloom
Is on the western hills, and fitfully the blast
Tears a blue path among the rolling mists.
The lightning gleams more vividly ; and Fear,
Crouching appalled beneath a blasted tree,
Traces the visages of thousand fiends
Amid the darkness of yon muffled sky.
— Far different to the poet's eagle-glance
Seemeth the unseen spirit of the storm—
Even a virgin—beautiful as light,
And garlanded with flowers. In solitary pomp,
And dallying with the lightnings in her path,
She comes through that magnificence of gloom.

On, beauteous goddess ! Yon tumultuous sound
Is the loud revelry of angel-voices,
Which celebrate thy nuptials with the north ;
And the winged lightning shot athwart thy path,
What is it but the hymeneal torch
That lights thee onward to connubial joys,
And which in spring and autumn may be seen
Still turning either way, as if to guard
The summer-paradise that lies between.

In rapture and in holy fear I stand.
There is some Power above us—some vast Soul—
Which guides and animates this universe.
Magnificence and might attend his path,
And something more—UNUTTERABLE GRACE.

TO A SNOW-DROP.

IN THE MANNER OF THE PERSIAN ODE.

I.

CHILD of the north-wind ! thou hast been
Beneath the wreathen snow ;
And there, in silence and unseen,
It was thy wish to blow.

II.

But gaily o'er the western wave
A Zephyr winged his flight,
And found thee in thy lonely cave,
And wooed thee into light.

III.

And now beneath th' Italian blue
Of yon translucent sky,
Thy petals, all of virgin hue,
In beauteous ruin lie.

IV.

Thus Haydi's fate, mysterious flower !
Is symbolled forth in thine :
Obscure he is in life's short hour,
But doomed in death to shine.

CARMEN AUTUMNALE.

I.

My walk on the northern blast hath been—
I come with a pestilence-sweep—
With the speed of the Libyan bedouin,
To strip the woods of their vesture green :
My harvest I must reap.
The reaper's sickle afield I see,
And mine on the whitening woods must be.

II.

Thou hast seen the hectic's faithless blush
On the cheek as it fades away—
Behold ! I too have my hectic-flush,
Which I send abroad, ere yet I crush
The woods in sublime decay ;
And the glow which lights yon flaming sky,
Is the flag of Winter's victory.

III.

Swiftly I come, and I tell a tale
Which he who runs may read—
My voice is abroad on the whistling gale,
And lo ! on each leaf that strews the vale
I write my mystic creed.
The Sybil's leaves to the winds were given,
Yet they, like mine, were the voice of Heaven.

IV.

Reader ! an autumn is waiting thee—
Thou too shalt be old and gray ;

And soon as the Angel of Death may see,
That thou and thy generation be
All hoary, he shall say :—
They are white unto harvest—let us rise,
And bear to the charnel-house our prize.

ROMAN CAMP AT FENDOCH,

NEAR THE SMALL GLEN, IN THE PARISH OF MONZIE.

UNDER the general head of *Antiquities*, the following remarks occur in Mr. Laurie's statistical account of Monzie :—" This parish possesses some claim to the notice of the antiquary. Indeed there are few localities in Scotland more rich in Celtic and Roman remains than this and several of the adjoining parishes. Within the range of a few miles, the traveller may visit the Roman Camps at Ardoch, Comrie, and Strageth,—the first allowed to be the most entire specimen of Roman castramentation in Britain,—besides many small forts and fragments of military roads, some of the latter several miles in length."

The Camps above-named are not in the parish of Monzie, but there is one at Fendoch, in the eastern portion of that beautiful parish, which, as well as the Camp at Ardoch, is the property of that model of a landlord and a gentleman, Major Moray Stirling of Abercairney and Ardoch. In reference to this interesting Camp, we take the liberty to quote the following details from the same admirable statistical account. The extract is long; but let the interest which attaches to the subject be our apology for introducing it in this place.

"The chief object of interest to the antiquary," says the Statist, "is the Camp at Fendoch, called in Gaelic *Raenfhandoch*, i. e. Fendoch Point. Its traditional name is the Roman Camp, and there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the appellation; and that it is in reality the work of the Roman legions under Agricola, or one of his successors. It is situated upon a table-land, at the lower extremity of that remarkable pass called the Small Glen, already described,* and within view of the fort upon Dunmore. The River Almond, issuing from this defile, turns to the left, so as to form a right angle with its former course; and with its steep banks constitutes a natural defence to the Camp on the north side. The west is protected by a marsh; the south by a small stream called the Burn of Fendoch; and the east by a natural declivity. It may probably contain 45 acres of ground. It would appear that, at the period when the former Statistical Account was published, the trenches were entire, and in some places six feet deep; but both rampart and trench are now fast disappearing under the operation of the plough. The rampart upon the north side, after running for a considerable distance in nearly a straight line upon the brow of the table-land, suddenly descends into the plain below, encloses a spring of excellent water, again climbs the bank, and pursues its rectilinear course. This is the only spring within the Camp. Near the side of the river, there is a small elliptical enclosure, formed of turf and stone, measuring 12 paces by 8. The moor on the east side of the Camp, bears marks of having once been the arena of conflicting armies, and was covered till lately, to the extent of several acres, with cairns; and when these were removed to form a new road, some fragments of urns containing bones were found

* See the last of these Miscellaneous Poems.

underneath. Several of these cairns measured 10, 13, or 14 paces in diameter.

"In the month of August, 1834, while a labourer, of the name of Donald Stewart, was employed in digging across the eastern rampart of the camp, for the purpose of constructing a stone fence, he discovered at some distance below the surface, three pots or kettles, the largest of which broke in pieces while he was in the act of raising it from the ground. The other two measured $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter by 3 in depth, and 10 inches in diameter by $4\frac{1}{2}$ in depth, respectively, and were composed of a series of concentric circles, fastened together with nails, the larger pot having a straight handle 21 inches in length. Along with these were deposited three heads of spears or javelins, 7 inches in length, two of these still having wood adhering to their sockets; a piece of flat iron or other metal, $18\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, having a striking resemblance to a Roman sword preserved in the Museum of Antiquaries, Edinburgh, except that the latter measures 25 inches in length, but as the former appears to have been broken at one end, it must have been at one time longer; three pair of bits; two pair of shears, 11 inches long, the blades alone measuring 4 inches; a sort of spoon, the handle of which measures 10 inches, including the diameter of the mouth;—this corresponds exactly with the descriptions and representations given of the thuribulum found in Pompeii; a beautiful hinge of a yellowish metal, still covered with a slight coating of what appears to be silver, 4 inches in length, carved, and in excellent preservation; two implements resembling the wimble used by carpenters for boring; a piece of flat iron about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, bent in the form of a pair of sugar-tongs, the edges at one end bent inwards so as almost to meet and form a socket, the other end being broken off. Besides these, there were other articles whose uses were not very apparent.

Those whose size would admit of it were found carefully packed in the largest kettle (which, as already stated, was broken), and a flat stone was placed over its mouth. The discovery of these relics establishes one important fact, namely, that cavalry lay in this encampment.

“ While all traces of that power,” continues Mr. Laurie, “ which the mighty Roman cast like a mantle over the world, are fast hastening to decay, it would be matter of lasting and extreme regret, should all such interesting fragments not be collected and preserved with scrupulous and jealous care. To the imaginative mind it might seem like the gathering up of laurels which have fallen from the conqueror’s brow, for here it was that a power mightier by far than that of Rome proclaimed, ‘ hither shalt thou come, but no farther.’ ”

In addition to what the amiable and accomplished Parochial Teacher of Monzie has thus so well expressed, I must here record a very striking fact which proves that tradition, although she may occasionally mislead, is sometimes a faithful chronicler.

I have often visited this Roman camp, for, besides the interest which an admirer of the ancient classics cannot fail to feel in tracing the broad footsteps of imperial Rome amidst the wilds of his own land, the scene all around is solemnly magnificent and impressive; and often have I gazed with rapture on the bold alpine masses of that noble mountain, which is seen from this spot through the vista of the Narrow Glen, rising like a vast barrier at its northern extremity, bathed in the rich hues of an autumnal evening, and strikingly contrasting with the dark piles of shadow which already slept in that vale of death. Some few of the more cultivated Roman warriors may have stood on the same spot, at the same “ witching hour,” with Horace or Virgil in their hand, and acknowledged that Soracte was outdone and Olympus at least rivalled,

while the same sun which gilded the former and made the latter transparent, shed his parting hues of inexpressible and yet tender glory on that northern giant.

On occasion of one of these visits I was kindly conducted over the camp by my worthy friend Mr. James Drummond, who now farms it, and like a good farmer, does what he can to obliterate every trace of it. Having shewn me the very spot from which the camp-kettles above-mentioned were extracted by Donald Stewart, he directed my attention to a circular and seemingly artificial hollow, close at hand, and stated that, long before the kettles were discovered, his father had frequently mentioned to him, that in that hollow tradition reported that the Romans had cooked their victuals!

The long handles attached to the kettles evidently shewed that they were intended for a large common fire, which would of course prohibit very near access.

Tradition still points out the green, now covered with coppice, where the inmates of the camp are said to have washed and dried their clothes. It is near that excellent and copious well, mentioned in the preceding extract, out of which I have often drunk when not athirst (to satisfy a different thirst from that of the corporeal appetite), and around which, as it is the only part of the camp securely protected against the ravages of the peaceful plough, the remaining circumvallations are more clearly discernible than they are elsewhere.

Mr. L. states, that "on the top of Dunmore (a lofty hill), overlooking the Small Glen and the Roman camp, are the ruins of a fort, believed to be Celtic. It consists of a stone wall, in some places double, surrounding probably half a rood of ground. The stones upon the west side are partially vitrified; and at Middle Lethendy (a place in the neighbourhood) is another of larger size."

It is possible, that from these forts the Caledonians

overlooked the operations of their Roman antagonists; and when the reader remembers that the Fendoch camp is immediately at the mouth or outlet of the Small Glen, one of the great passes into the Perthshire Highlands, and that the Romans do not appear to have succeeded in penetrating farther in this direction, he will perceive how naturally this interesting and wild locality suggested the following lines.

THE CALEDONIAN CHIEF'S ADDRESS TO THE ROMAN INVADER.

LINES SUGGESTED BY THE ROMAN CAMP AT FENDOCH.

BACK, thou proud Roman ! Hast thou left at home
Thy children and thy wife, to render ours
Orphans and widows, while thine own are left
In orphancy and widowhood behind ?
What demon of rapacious conquest leads
And marshalls all thy ranks, and pours them out,
Like streams of fire, to wither and devour
That world thou call'st thine own ? What spirit prompts
Thine eagle thus to soar till it would perch
On a bleak wilderness of barren hills ?
Is conquest, or is wealth, thine idol ? Roman !
Seekest thou empire, though it be but rocks,
To glut thine avarice—to appease thy thirst
Of being greater than the world thou rul'st ?
Look at these hills : thou canst not conquer them :
They will not bend to worship in thy shrine—
Neither shall we. These are our ramparts—Roman !
These old rocks we call our own—and *shall*.
We cannot stoop to thee : we soar on them ;

And that thou canst not. Have we not withstood
Thy phalanx and thy force—until thy pride
Would conquer, not for conquest, but revenge?

Thou camest to instruct us! We will take
Our lessons from our sires. From them we learned,
That to be free is to be noble. To be slaves—
We know not what it is; for that *they* taught us not,
And thou canst not. These hills are free—
And yet we rule them. Whom thou rul'st
Can ne'er be free: in that we are thy masters.
We have our schools too—our academies—
On battlefields, and by our ancient hearths;
And there we learnèd, in our younger days,
That natal soil is sacred—even though rock.

Come then, proud conqueror! plant thy sandalled
Yet one step farther on these sterile hills— [foot
Advance one step, and we shall teach thee well
That which we never learnèd—to go back.
These very stones—fragments of rock—we hurl
Against thee in defiance. Cast them back—
They will not come: they never did retreat.
We have not taught them that. That is a lesson
We do reserve for thee, who cam'st so far
To study Roman habits. We can teach you *them*,
But not our own—for victory is a habit we have got,
Which thee we cannot teach, when matched with us.

Ye everlasting hills! our fathers' hills—
Stamped sacred by their feet! No other foot
But theirs and ours shall walk ye. Other dust
But theirs and ours shall never mix with yours—
Save that which dies beneath our dagger's point;
Or his, who with the dagger makes us dust.

ASPIRATIONS.

I.

THE flickering of the ardent flame
Is tow'rs the stars sublime,
And burns my spirit to the same—
I long yon hills to climb—
To leave these vales, so soft, so tame,
And scale the sterile rocks, whence all my fathers came.

II.

The rushing of all streams that roll
Is tow'rs the lowly mead ;
And so—the torrent of my soul
Doth to deep chasms lead :
Fain would I roam without control,
And bound from rock to rock, 'mid Scotia's wild Tyrol.

LINES TO MONTROSE.

I.

MONTROSE ! I am not born of thee—
I dwell not by the dark-blue sea ;
My home hath on the mountains been
Mid aërial rock, and dark ravine ;
And, loveliest Daughter of the Sea !
I feel that I am nought to thee.

II.

Nor boots it. Though a mountain-child,
And nursed amid the dark and wild—

Taught to admire the wreathing storm,
And Nature in her fiercest form—
I have, fair offspring of the sea !
A throb of sympathy for thee.

III.

A restless wanderer I have been,
'Mid many a soft Italian scene ;
And where, beneath their roseate sky,
A thousand Grecian islets lie : *
But ne'er, in these bright climes of bliss,
Have I beheld a scene like this.

IV.

The sun is waning—clouds are driven
Athwart the azure vault of heaven,
Steeped in the opal's varying light,
Irradiant with the dews of night,
And pierced by yonder gleaming spire,
As by a pointed cone of fire.

V.

Far to the west, like birds of prey,
The hills which skirt thee soar away—
And, like a warrior's casque between,
Thy sea-lake's sun-lit breast is seen.
While, darkly, towards farthest East
The Northern Ocean waves his crest.

* Only in the longings of imagination has the writer yet visited these classical climes. Indeed, the entire colouring of this short piece is somewhat exaggerated ; and the impressions which gave birth to it were received at a susceptible moment, and in circumstances peculiarly calculated to exhibit the scene to advantage. It must be confessed, however, that when tide is full, Montrose, seen from certain points, and in favourable circumstances, is not without its charms.

VI.

And lightly sweeps the wingèd skiff,
 In shadow of yon beetling cliff ;
 And proudly, like a condor sent
 To cleave its native element,
 The steam-boat bares her gallant breast,
 And marches o'er the watery waste.

VII.

Montrose ! I am not born of thee—
 I dwell not by the dark-blue sea ;
 My home hath on the mountains been,
 'Mid asrier rock and dark ravine ;
 And, loveliest Daughter of the Sea !
 I grieve that I am nought to thee.

PARAPHRASE

OF THE FOURTH CHAPTER OF THE REVELATION.

I.

I LOOKED, and saw a lofty throne
 With light and lustre streaming,
 And he that seemed to sit thereon
 Was like a jasper gleaming ;
 And round the throne a rainbow threw
 Its light so pale and tender,
 That scarce you marked its emerald hue
 Amid surrounding splendour.

II.

And forth from that majestic pile
 Were uttered earthquake-voices,
 And hymns of praise were heard the while,
 Like subterranean noises ;

And far above, a lowering cloud
 Appeared as cleft asunder,
And lightning flashed—and long and loud
 Was heard a peal of thunder.

III.

And seven lamps of shining brass
 Before the throne were glowing,
And there, a sea of molten glass
 In azure waves was flowing;
And four and twenty elders bright,
 Were on its banks reclining—
Arrayed in robes of snowy white,
 And crowns with rubies shining.

IV.

And, mingling with the glorious throng,
 Appeared four wondrous creatures—
The first was like a lion strong;
 The third had human features:
The second like an heifer seemed;
 The fourth the bird of Heaven:
And each with myriad eye-balls gleamed;
 To each six wings were given.

V.

And day and night that mystic crowd
 Stood round the throne adoring,
And halleluiahs long and loud,
 Through Heaven's high arch were soaring:—
“Jehovah! thou art holy still—
 The Lord of Hosts installed:
Which was, and is, and ever will
 The great I AM be called.”

VI.

And then the elders bowed them down
Before the throne of glory,
And, doffing each his golden crown,
Exposed their tresses hoary ;
And mingled in a chorus wild,
As they the throne surrounded—
Till anthems upon anthems piled,
From dome to dome resounded :—

VII.

“ To Him who rules in Heaven and earth—
In firmament and ocean—
All praise and honour, power and worth—
All duty and devotion.
For, issuing from his plastic hand,
Appeared the vast creation—
Yea, Heaven and earth, and sea and land,
And every race and nation ! ”

A PRAYER IN TROUBLE.

WRITTEN IN AN HOUR OF DEJECTION. MAY 10TH, 1841.

FATHER of lights ! that, with all-seeing eye,
Readest the secret anguish of the heart—
To thee I turn—to thee, with suppliant cry,
My agonized spirit would impart
Its bitterness of grief; for still thou hast
Been *my* best comforter in troubles past.

In midnight solitude and darkness, oft
Starting from dreamy terrors of the night,

My soul on wingèd prayer hath soared aloft
 To the fair realms of eternal light,
 And stayed itself on thee, and found a rest—
 Pillowed, like John, upon the Saviour's breast.

Oh ! in this darkness—not of midnight hour,
 But of a soul widowed and comfortless,
 Repose I on the same Almighty power—
 To thee again I come in my distress ;
 For many are the sources of my tears—
Without are fightings, and within are fears.

Shine on me with thy face. Oh ! pour around
 The light which thine illumining Spirit shed
 On David's heart, when, with the harp's glad sound,
 He the loud anthems of thy praises led,
 And sang, exultant, what with prophet's eye
 He saw yet buried in futurity.

Shine on me with thy face ; and oh ! dispel
 The doubts and dread forebodings of my soul :
 Assuage within me the tumultuous swell
 Of billows that around and o'er me roll :
 Shine through the storm, which thou thyself hast sent
 In chastening love, athwart my firmament.

PIGRAM.

WRITTEN DURING A LUNAR ECLIPSE, WHICH OCCURRED IN OCTOBER,
 1837.

ALAS ! and is it ever thus,
 That Earth is doomed to darken Heaven ?
 And for the splendour shed on us
 Shall nothing but our gloom be given ?

LINES TO A SNOW-DROP.

WRITTEN FEBRUARY 21ST, 1841, ON OBSERVING ONE OF THOSE HARDY
LITTLE FLOWERS BLOSSOMING AMID A WREATH OF SNOW.

SWEET harbinger of genial spring !
Most welcome is thy blossoming—
Thy tender petals, pale and white
As the first streak of orient light—
Pure as the virgin-snows that fell
To shield thee from the nipping blast,
And lingering still around thy dell,
As if enthralled by mystic spell,
Seem loath to leave thee, till the knell
 Of wintry storms be past :
How beautiful ! when all around
Still slumbers in the chilly ground,
And leafless trees and cheerless plains
Still tell that gloomy winter reigns.

Who woke thee, nurseling of the snows ?
From thy long winter of repose ?
Say—did the tempest's ruthless sweep
Arouse thee from thy torpid sleep ?—
Or was it the first note of spring
 That charmed thee in thy dark retreat,
To peer—a pale and spectral thing—
 Forth from thy snowy winding-sheet ?—
Or, did some wandering Zephyr stray
 Athwart thy low and lonely bed,
And hurrying heedless on his way,
 Awake thee with unconscious tread ?—
Or heard'st thou, mingling with thy dreams,
The cataract-roar of snow-fed streams ?—

Or caught thine ear—mysterious thing !
The footsteps of advancing spring ?

Ah no : it is a mightier power
That calls thee forth, adventurous flower !
And bids thee thy short matins sing,
At the first dawn of opening spring—
That Spirit which, when Time began,
Moved darkly o'er the troubled deep,
And summoned from chaotic sleep
Creation and the soul of man—
The voice of Him who only spoke,
And fair creation swam in light—
That voice upon thy slumbers broke,
And called thee from thy wintry night—
That Spirit o'er creation still
Moves onward with resistless might,
And, when and wheresoe'er he will,
Distributes life and light—
Bids *life* through nature's labyrinths roll—
Pours *light* into the darkened soul.

Oh ! if upon *our* souls the chill
Of wintry cloud be brooding still,
May that pure Spirit dart a ray
Through the thick midnight gloom,
And pour the glorious light of day
Into the dreary tomb :
Where, buried since the world began,
Lieth the noblest part of man :
And may its quickening influence there,
Fill the dry bones with life,
And quell, as with the might of prayer,
Wild passion's sinful strife ;

And, warmly breathing on the heart
As with the spring's soft breath,
Burst the cold icy chains apart,
Which fetter it to death.

And in the heart, thus breathed upon,
May Christian graces rise—
Meekness and Patience blent in one,
And all life's charities.
But first—let pale Repentance spring,
Like the sweet snow-drop blossoming,
Beneath the snows that still impart
Their icy coldness to the heart;
And meekly lift, amid the storm,
Her drooping head and hueless form.

LINES ON SCHIHALLION.

WHICH MOUNTAIN THE AUTHOR HAD THE PLEASURE OF ASCENDING
AND DESCENDING TWICE ON THE MORNING OF THURSDAY, AUGUST
29TH, 1833.

AGAIN has Nature, o'er my native land,
Flung like a robe the radiancy of day :
On huge Schihallion's towering front I stand,
And thence the face of rising morn survey.
Far to the west, the brightening hills display
Their gilded summits, lofty, barren, wild—
A gorgeous scene—at once sublime and gay—
In purple mist, in rocky grandeur piled !

But lo ! the mist infolds its shadowy form,
Wrapping the mountain in a winding sheet ;

And northern winds provoke the rising storm,
And loud upon its sterile summit beat.
Scarce do I hear the distant sheep-fold bleat,
Where the white tempest yon deep hollow shrouds ;
And the fair world, that glittered at my feet,
Has, like a sun-bow, faded into clouds.

Yet mark the change—again the mists retire,
And, faintly marked, a distant lake is seen,
Where Rannoch's merry woods to heaven aspire,
And shed upon the hills a pallid green :
But still swift streams of vapour intervene,
And half conceal the dusky hills around ;
Save where the rocks, in slaty streaks between,
Protrude their points above the heathy ground.

And now, the veil—the misty veil—withdrawn,
What sudden glory bursts upon the view !
The Lyon glittering o'er the distant lawn—
The Tummel roaring fierce and rugged through—
Hills above hills, in endless glory too,
Are piled majestic 'mid the clouds on high ;
And see afar the rainbow's varied hue
Stride the blue ridge, and mingle with the sky !

TO ST. ANDREWS,

ON LATELY REVISITING THAT ANCIENT SEAT OF A UNIVERSITY.

OLD city of a thousand years !
Again thy towers I see—
And deep the memory of the past
Entwines itself with thee.

For here my mind did first behold
 A strange and new-found light ;
 And then it was that all the past
 Appeared a dream of night.

There is a time, when o'er the soul
 New thoughts and visions steal ;
 And what we often *saw* before,
 We then begin to *feel*.

St. Andrews ! to thy college-halls
 My mental birth I trace ;
 And nothing from my spirit shall
 Thy memory efface.

NEW YEAR'S DAY MISTIMED.

A TRANSLATION FROM OVID.

I.

COME, tell me, Muse ! why does the year begin
 With winter's blasts—with January's snows ?
 Unmeet companions, thus to usher in
 Aught save a year of portents and of woes !
 Why not begin when new-born Nature throws
 A swaddling-mantle o'er her fairy-form—
 When shoots the crocus—when the damask rose
 Hangs out its blushes—when the tender germ,
 Pregnant with beauty, buds, secure from frost and storm ?

II.

Why not begin when first the tender vines
 Look out to see that winter has gone by—

When high in heaven a new Apollo shines,
And on his brow appears *young Majesty* ?
Why not begin when first the azure sky
Is filled with warblers--when the tardy earth
Receives the plough, and when the glad herds cry
From mead to mead, in ecstacy of mirth ?
This--this were to be NEW : this--this alone were BIRTH.

THE LAST OF THE HILLS.

I.

LAST of the hills ! my path has been
Upon the heathy wild ;
And I have climb the craggy height,
And gazed in transports of delight,
Where sterile grandeur crowned the scene,
And rocks on rocks were piled.

II.

Last of the hills ! my wandering foot
Hath traversed moor and fell ;
And still I would from year to year,
A free and fearless mountaineer,
Proceed in the same wild pursuit,
For I do love it well.

III.

• But now I wander far away
To climes which know me not ;
And here, as waneth from my view
The last of Scotia's mountain's blue,

I feel the last celestial ray
Beam down upon my lot.

IV.

My lot may be 'mid murmuring rills,
Or on the dark-blue sea,
Or where the purple vintage flows,
Or where the shadowy peepul grows ;
But still, thou last of many hills,
My spirit rests with thee !

EDWARD AND MARY;

OR, SLEEPING LOVE AWAKENED BY THE SOUND OF A
TRUMPET.

FROM earliest youth that blooming pair
Had breathed the same fresh mountain-air—
Had lived, and laughed, and wept together,
At merry jest or tale of sadness,
And plaited the same sprigs of heather,
In freaks of childish gladness.
And now, that Edward's brow had caught
The settled shade of manlier thought,
And dawnings of the woman's grace
Beamed in the smiles of Mary's face,
They often still, as friend with friend,
The livelong summer day would spend—
With pencil's art, or music's power,
Beguiling the too fleeting hour ;
And—each to each a faithless glass—
Scarce marking the swift moments pass.

As friend with friend?—Was this the feeling
Which linked these two young hearts together?
Or had not wingèd Love been stealing
A march on his less ardent brother?
Ah yes! they loved, but with a flame
Which borrowed friendship's mask and name—
Which—though in either heart it shone
With equal and excessive light—
To both remained unseen, unknown,
Like meteor in the cloud of night.
They loved—but as the placid river,
Meeting no barrier in its course,
Descends and would descend for ever,
With noiseless though resistless force—
So, o'er their hearts love's tide had rolled,
Free as the sea-breeze o'er their mountains,
Unheard, unheeded, uncontrolled,
And pure as their own crystal fountains—
Happy had it thus rolled for ever,
Like the eternal tranquil river!

But hark! the trumpet's war-notes clear
Fall loud on the astounded ear,
And England's merry vales they fill,
And beacons fly from hill to hill;
Till Wales, both far and near,
From every rock, and nook, and glen,
Pours forth her mailed men.

But who is this with lofty crest,
And form of warrior-mould,
That lingers far behind the rest,
As if with craven-fear oppress,
And rushes not to bare his breast
Where the tide of war hath rolled?

'Tis he—'tis he—though not in fear,
He loiters idly there;
For, shedding many a bitter tear,
I see a lady standing near,
In sadness and despair:
And now he soothes her fond alarms,
And clasps her in his steel-clad arms.

Ah yes! the mystery long concealed—
The secret of their love is spoken,
By the loud trumpet-blast revealed—
The spell at length is broken.
Yes—Love's gigantic power
Wakes in an evil hour,
When glory's call is stronger still;
And Edward, from his native hill,
Must follow to the plains of France
Young Henry's giddy dance.

AND NOW MY FOOT IS ON THE BARK.

WRITTEN IN THE ERIN, STEAM-BOAT, BOUND FROM HULL TO DUNKIRK,
SEPTEMBER, 1839.

AND now my foot is on the bark—the bark is on the wave;
And I am bound for gallant France—the gallant and the
brave;
For France can fight on any field, and with a juster cause
She never yet had bowed her neck to foreign foes or laws.
Then swiftly let the paddles ply, and brief our passage be;
For I do long our ancient foes on their own soil to see.

The rushing blast, the rolling tide, are leagued to stem
our way,

But we are bearing calmly on—resistlessly as they :
The spirit of immortal Watt directs us fair and fast—
He wields his crashing cylinder, and quells the armèd
blast.

Then swiftly let the paddles ply, and brief our passage be ;
For I do long the vine-clad fields of sunny France to see.

In sooth—it is a peerless thing to leave our mountain-
home,

And forth upon the world away in liberty to roam—
To give our sorrows to the wind—our guidance to the wave,
And dashing through the foaming sea, to seek a home or
grave.

Then swiftly let the paddles ply, and brief our passage be ;
For I do long this world throughout to traverse and to see.

FAREWELL TO THE ALMOND.

And now farewell, though not for ever ;
Yet, if for ever—fare thee well.—*Byron.*

ALMOND, adieu ! On yonder Grampian hills
Thy limpid urn the lowering tempest fills :
The dark cloud feeds thee, and yon mountain seems
The Highland cradle of thine infant-streams :
Swift as the Rhone—a regal pilgrim thou,
With lordly rocks to coronet thy brow,
And clouds to veil thee : swift as arrowy Rhone,
Thou girdest thee with might, and sweepest on :

'Mid woods and rocks I trace thy gleaming sheet,
Till here I find thee murmuring at my feet.

Stream of my love ! at this sequestered spot
Imperial fate decrees a separate lot
To thee and me. At this embowering dell
I whisper to thy waves my last farewell.
Our paths are different—to the ocean thine,
And to the turmoil of the world is mine.
Yet, as impelled by some resistless force,
We hasten on in our divergent course—
A mystic fortune blends our separate fates—
One consummation thee and me awaits—
Thou to the ocean sweepest down, while I
Descend into a vast futurity.

Then, fare thee well ! to other scenes I go—
Perchance to climes where broader torrents flow—
Where the swarth Indian ploughs his native floods,
And wide savannahs wave with boundless woods.
Ay, fare thee well ! and yet where'er I wend
Thou shalt flow with me till my wanderings end—
Where'er I go, thou shalt not be forgot,
And here are those who shall forget me not.
Them, too, I leave—but what is space between,
Where once community of soul hath been ?
Can mountains intercept the memory's beams ?
Are thoughts, like fairies, stopped by running streams ?
Ah ! no—let friendship wave her potent wand,
And distant images before her stand—
For her each wingèd wind obedient veers,
And to and fro our mutual greeting bears.
Touched by this spell, my spirit oft shall rise,
And, only marked by friendship's eagle-eyes,
Shall walk these shades—from distant scenes shall flee,
To list the music of thy minstrelsy.

And now, farewell ! I have not long been here,
Yet much have learned with the revolving year ;
And some have found *the kernels of mankind*,
Whom with profound regret I leave behind.

BIRTH-DAY ODE.

WRITTEN DECEMBER 9TH, 1844, BEING THE TWENTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AUTHOR'S BIRTH-DAY.

THERE is not a man can hush
The click of Time's old clock—
The *Moments* they dance, and the *Minutes* they rush,
The young and the hoary head to crush,
And the *Hours* give a heavy knock ;
And the *Days*, and *Weeks*, and *Months*, and *Years*,
Are aye, like Clotho's fatal shears,
Clipping the thread of life—
And slaughtering down, with a cut or a thrust,
Him who comes—as come all must—
To the edge or point of their stabbing-knife :
For scarcely a minute since the world began,
That has not murdered some living man ;
And the hour when an infant draws its first breath
Is always the hour of some old man's death.

Thousands are dying, thousands dead lying,
On this the day of my birth ;
And still Time's pendulum is swinging,
And still the light-hearted bells are ringing ;
And sounding far, and sounding near,
And clattering merrily and clear,
They seem to say to the sons of earth—

“ Eat, drink, be merry : to-morrow you die.
Wipe the tear—suppress the sigh—
Seize the moments as they fly—
Mark the failing of the eye—
The ebbing of the glass :
Life’s sands are running—there’s no use shunning
The sweets of life in the midst of death ;
For death *will* come, and life *will* pass,
Wherever there is breath.”

This is a truth to mortals spoken,
But it is not all the truth—
The wheel and the pitcher *must* be broken,
And man *must die*, forsooth ;
But the thread of EXISTENCE will not part,
Though grim Death tug at the throbbing heart
Till the eye-balls out of their sockets start :
It is so long, it is so strong,
That time may pass, and walls of brass
May melt into an invisible mass,
And earth’s ribbed rocks may burst ;
But, with an existence longer still
Than the life of the everlasting hill,
Man must be *blessed* or *cursed*.

THE SMALL GLEN.

IN reference to this natural curiosity, the following remarks occur in the Statistical Account, to which we have already been indebted for some interesting information on the subject of the Roman Camp at Fendoch.

“ Glenalmond, to the eastward of its junction with the

Vale of Monzie, is an open cultivated country; but here the banks of the river (Almond) suddenly assume the form and character of lofty hills; their bases on the opposite sides of the glen approaching so near, as, in some places, barely to leave room for the bed of the river. They may be said to average from 1,000 to 1,200 feet in height. They are entirely destitute of trees; but here and there may be seen a stunted shrub, seeking a scanty subsistence among the rocks. The river Almond here measures 70 feet in width. Its waters are transparent, and run with considerable velocity over a bed of rock and gravel. Its general depth varies from a few inches to several feet. This romantic pass continues for upwards of two miles; and, on account of its narrowness, is familiarly known by the name of the ' Small Glen.'*

"This Glen"—continues the same writer—"having attracted the notice of Mr. Wordsworth, any apology for introducing the subjoined beautiful lines from the pen of that distinguished poet, will be deemed unnecessary.

' In this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the Narrow Glen;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one:
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heaped and rent
As by a spirit turbulent;

* The word "small" or "sma'," signifies in the Scottish language "strait" or "narrow," as well as "little" or "diminutive." In this particular instance it has exclusively the former signification, as the *tout ensemble* of this romantic scene is on a large and gigantic scale.—G. B.

Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And everything unreconciled ;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet ;
But this is calm, there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.
Does then the Bard sleep here indeed ?
Or is it but a groundless creed ?
What matters it ?—I blame them not
Whose fancy in this lonely spot
Was moved ; and in such way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A Convent, even a hermit's Cell
Would break the silence of this Dell :
It is not quiet, is not ease ;
But something deeper far than these :
The separation that is here
Is of the grave ; and of austere
Yet happy feelings of the dead :
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race !
Lies buried in this lonely place.'

" The Small Glen, having no lateral communication or opening, resembles a funnel cut in the solid earth, presenting in its sinuosities various obstacles to a free transmission of the air ; it is therefore subject to contrary currents and eddies of the most violent character. Recent instances have occurred of travellers on horseback having been blown from the saddle,* driven to seek shelter in holes or behind rocks, and there detained for hours until the fury of the storm abated."

* This account was written in May, 1837.

THIS valley—deep, capacious, and sublime—
Is stamped with thoughtfulness—it is a lake
Brim-full with ebbing and returning tides
Of wild and solemn fancies, which roll past,
And leave the mind in solitude, with crowds
Of ancient recollections boiling up
Like the fresh founts of these eternal hills.

I sit upon a soldier's nameless grave—
Nameless, yet not unmarked—for near this mound
Of green and sacred turf there stands a stone,
Gigantic and apart, which often casts
A welcome shadow on the soldier's cloak
Of peaceful mould, exchanged at last
For that with which, in dim and howling nights,
He wrapped his shivering form and fearless breast.
Peace to the ashes of a nameless soldier !

Near to this spot of rudest sepulture,
A stream, scarce yet a river, hurries past,*
And heeds it not; while overhead and far
As eye can reach on either hand extending,
Lofty hills, rock-ribbed and tempest-scarred,
Tower from this earth and almost meet in heaven,
Lifting the traveller with them, till he sees,
In all her glory, half his father-land.

This is a glen I love with my whole heart,
For its wild, solemn, bleak magnificence;
And here I first beheld, with thoughts of awe
Which then I scarce could lisp in boyish rhyme,
A specimen of nature's sternest grandeur.
It is a blessing to have such a scene
Embosomed in the mind and memory :

• The Almond.

It fades not like a tale that has been told :
Absence and passing years abrade it not :
Time drives his ploughshare o'er the furrowed brow—
Yea, through proud palaces and crowded streets,
O'erturning all, and sowing fern and salt
On fields where empires grew—but even Time,
With plough, or scythe, or pick-axe, never can
Eradicate impressions which a scene
Like this, first-seen, stamps inwardly—
Imperishably—on the deathless soul.

Legend is here ; and with a husky voice,
Which sounds as from the tomb of other years,
It says, that Ossian's ashes were inhumed
Within yon narrow bed of "four gray stones."
The four gray stones are there—but not the ashes :
Them, those winds on which his fathers' forms
Met the poetic frenzy of his eye,
Have swept away—
And nothing but the stones—not even a cairn—
Mark where his ashes—do not now repose.

Not far from this, is shewn the fatal spot—
Late marked with blood—where a poor shepherd boy,
Tending his sheep upon the lone hill-side,
Fell with a loosened rock, and rolling down
From yonder dizzy altitude, was stretched
A senseless, mangled, bloody corpse below.

These are strange, saddening memories of death :
And when—as oft, the spirit of the storm,
Roused from his lair, in terror and in strength
Rushes adown this melancholy glen,
With force which would uproot and tear to shreds
Aught but the stunted juniper, that grows

Rare and deep-sheltered, wedged between the rocks—
A sound most dread and awful—like the rush
Of earthquake-thunderings, or the distant roar
Of Ocean's angry howl, when his white mane
Is vexed with storms—reverberates in the depths
Of these wild cliffs; and sudden meteors flash;
And incorporeal forms, and dying shrieks,
Startle the traveller's horse, whose rider lies,
Dashed from his seat, upon the rocking earth.*

* These phenomena are not purely imaginary. The violence of the wind has been already noticed: the frequent appearance of most alarming meteors is a fact reported on very good authority; and, whatever may be the peculiarity of acoustic construction which produces the effect, it is well-known to the inhabitants of Monzie, that during violent storms, when the wind is from certain points of the compass, the Small Glen utters forth an awful sound, like the growl of deep thunder, which is heard with impressive effect to a great distance.

ACTIVITY.

[THIS and the four following pieces having been kindly placed at the Author's disposal by a friend, he takes the liberty to insert them in this place.]

WHY roll the radiant Orbs that spangle space
With ceaseless motion, and prodigious pace—
While ev'n our own inferior little Sphere
Metes out, with busy care, day, month, and year ?
Why frets old briny Ocean 'gainst the Land,
Sapping the hills, and grating rocks to sand—
For ever vexed that Continents should dare
To mock his wrath, and raise their heads in air ?
Why race the Winds, on restless pinions borne,
Nor halt from morn to night, from night to morn,
But onward bear the clouds of every clime,
And emulate the mighty strides of Time ?
Why dance the Seasons round with rapid glee,
Dame Nature's wardrobe varying constantly ?
Why gush the Rivers from their founts of snow,
To lave unwearyed the plains below ?
Why must all vegetation spring or fade—
As well the sturdiest oak as tenderest blade ?
Why every atom through Creation's range
Follow the laws of never-ending change ?
Why ?—To what end—if not that all may see
Their being given them for ACTIVITY ?

* * * * *

Activity is ease—employment, peace ;
But festering cares with Indolence increase.
O Indolence !—by Thomson truly sung—
Strong are the charms and venom of thy tongue.
How many a Soul, ambitious to be great,
Sucks thy soft breath, and finds oblivious fate !
How many a Slave, aspiring to be free,
Resigns his hopes of liberty for thee !
How many are, with native talent born,
Who might their father-land improve, adorn,
Yet sink, thro' Indolence, beneath her scorn !

See the young Bard, on Fancy's wings sublime,
Survey the *past*, to fly through *future* time !
Fame's glittering summits fascinate his eye,
While Hope upheaves his breast exultantly.
But, lo ! he pauses on a mid-way height,
And weighs the toil attending farther flight :
Fatigued and sullen, he at length reclines
Amid some hanging-vineyard's tempting vines.
Awhile he feasts : then languor slowly creeps
O'er all his nerves ; by turns he laughs—he sleeps :
Inertness chains his spirit to the soil,
And serpent-thoughts within his bosom coil ;
But potent luxuries still their bites allay,
And what cares he though vigour melt away ?
He lolls a season in seductive ease,
Snatching at pleasures that soon fail to please ;
Till—his first aspirations all forgot—
He only lives to curse that fatal spot.

'Tis thy delight, soft Indolence ! to lie
In heavy slumber on the half-sealed eye—
To live *half-life*—to see things but in part—
The grand in Nature, or refined in Art.

“ Let me have comfort ”—this exhausts thy prayer—
“ The yielding cushion, and elastic chair—
The sliding table, and the genial fire—
The fragrant censer—the time-serving lyre—
The savoury viand, and sweet spicy cake,
With varied wines th’ uneasy thirst to slake :
For these I ’ll live content—though scarce awake.”
But these tire, too ; and soon the curtains close,
That languor may be drowned in deep repose.
Repose ! Alas, ye night-mare victims ! tell
If *ye* repose, wrapped in that dreadful spell :
When hideous monsters crush the straining breast,
What then is sleep but mockery of rest ?
Thou sleeper ! wake—ere pangs, like birds of prey,
Pounce on thy limbs—thy vitals tear away—
Ere Avarice rob thee of thy property,
And Justice spare the thief to punish thee—
Ere Death and Hell laugh in thy bloated face,
Then lash thee to thy long, last *resting-place*.

As untilled lands pestiferous weeds produce,
That rise and rot in their own noxious juice—
As stagnant waters poisonous reptiles breed,
And from their surface fetid fumes proceed—
As unused steel contracts corrosive rust,
And books neglected shroud themselves in dust—
So, Indolence contaminates the soul,
Wherein rank passions thrive, and mock control :
The body, too, surcharged with fluids, grows
A listless mass—the Victim of Repose :
Health, Hope, and Happiness, in ruins lie,
And Life is swallowed up in Lethargy.

From action, action springs. Its seed blows wide—
Takes root and germinates on every side.

In *Force* and *Motion*, see them where we can,
There is a power to stir the mind of man.
See yon huge Vessel launch into the flood—
It lifts the soul, and stimulates the blood.
Behold the fire-eyed, snorting Racer bound
With whirlwind speed along the echoing ground—
Mark the Gyre-Eagle darting through the storm—
The ponderous Billow's rolling, foaming form—
The lurid Lightning as it rends the sky,
Flashing afar with dread velocity—
Look on Commotion's mightiest displays—
The thundering Av'lanche—the Volcano's blaze—
The fell Tornado—the impetuous Flood—
The clash of Armies amid smoke and blood—
The Titan-Earthquake shouldering underground,
While rock the Hills, and fabrics crash around—
And high in heaving thought the Soul will rise,
Upborne by strange electric sympathies.

So active Spirits all around them throw
A quickening influence, where'er they go.
Men of enlarged, elastic, ardent minds,
Urge others into life, as powerful winds
Arouse the sluggish billows of the sea,
And keep them in sustained activity.

Immortal Mortals! ye, whose giant-souls
Fathomed the Earth, and circumscribed the poles—
Whose visual rays, like plummet-lines reversed,
Sounded for worlds in Heaven's depths immersed—
Who, through thick nether darkness, dared to scan
The Firmament, and mapped it out for man—
Whose minds, inductive, linked effect and cause,
And opened up the stars' mysterious laws—

Speak from the tomb ! Could but your sacred dust
Break silence now, sure, some the voice would trust :
As down the vale of Time its echoes swept,
Thousands might wake, who otherwise had slept ;
And Genius, now relaxed and all inert,
Once roused, might unknown energy exert,
And plunge for Truth, where'er it could be found—
In air, fire, water, or deep under ground.

The Muse would now invoke the mighty Dead,
And here repeat, what they in spirit said :—
“ By earnest, anxious, unremitting toil
We baffled Error, and made Truth our spoil—
By studying Nature’s beauties and her laws
We learned to reverence more her FIRST GRAND CAUSE ;
And as our years fled past with winged speed
Joys came unsought, and blessed our toil indeed :
How blessed ! when ‘thwart the darkness of research
Discovery made Truth’s cheering beams to stretch :
The search itself was pleasure, but success
Seemed like a foretaste of celestial bliss.
The more we knew, the mightier God appeared—
The worthier to be praised, adored, revered ;
While fretful man, with his vain pomp and pride,
Seemed a mere *foam-bell* on Creation’s tide.
With breath a brief hour buoyant, he may fume
With frothy brightness—borrowed charms assume—
Heedless of **HIM** who animates his breast,
And lifts and decks his little sparkling crest.
But that brief hour, so precious to the wise,
The sluggard too *will* value—when he dies.”

Ye slothful ! hear—and hearing, cast aside
The love of death. Activity may guide

Your dormant souls to comforts yet unknown—
Unfelt—except by Industry alone.
O blessed activity ! when well employed,
What hope we for, that may not be enjoyed ?
Behold yon son of Industry—the foe
Of sloth and want, engenderers of woe :
Strong, steady, cheerful, he can well defy
The horny gripe of pinching poverty :
Misfortune stoops before him, as he springs
Resistless forward : Envy blunts her stings
Against the armour of his honest fame ;
And Malice blesses, when she strives to blame.
His active habits buoy his bounding health,
And yield him peace, and competence of wealth :
Prosperity rewards his prudent pains,
And happiness o'er all his family reigns.

Though labour was assigned us as a curse,
Aversion to it makes it doubly worse.
All nature felt the curse ; but mankind still
More curse themselves by stubbornness of will.
If God designs we should in labour spend
The strength He gives, dare we his plans amend ?
He mixed his curse with blessings ; but we may
Accept the curse—the blessings throw away.
Pigmies in sense ! Colossal fools in vice !
To lavish time, yet foster avarice—
Heaven's will resist, not counting the expense—
And bliss expect, *despite of PROVIDENCE* !

Before Man's birth unnumbered years moved by,
And he was sleeping in nonentity—
Why was he waked to life by SOVEREIGN will ?
Sure, not to slumber on unconscious still !
Why formed with sentiments *to be* refined,
And with Angelic energies of mind ?

Why warmed with passions, needing due control,
And promised strength to regulate the whole,
If strength be asked aright ? Why spurred with hope,
And goaded on by fear, that he may cope
With all the duties human life demands ?
Sure, not to shut the eyes, and fold the hands
In sensual ease or apathy supine,
And bury in the brute the soul divine !
Blind mortal ! read—'tis graven on thy heart,
That what thou wilt be, rests on what thou art :
A servant now, dependent thou shalt be
In time, and throughout all Eternity :
Thy life not thine—thy punishment alone,
If life neglected, will be deemed thine own.
Though life be short, 'tis much too long for some,
Who lose, in that short space, all time to come.

Shall summer-gnats the Summer-Sun deride
When cloud-clad Thunder marches by his side ?
Shall puny Man TH' OMNIPOTENT defy,
And float to Heaven in INACTIVITY !

Draw near yon couch where pampered Folly lies,
With death now settling on his languid eyes—
Before his mind, in vision, there appears
A ghostly gathering of neglected years :
In dreadful apparition, near they press—
A thick o'erwhelming *Cloud of Witnesses*.
Days, Hours, and Minutes, murdered as they passed,
Now triumph o'er their murderer at last ;
And from the shadows of the Past arise
A host of slighted Opportunities :
Once Angels these, now an accusing band,
With demon-aspect 'round his couch they stand,
And as the blood of injured Abel pled
For vengeance on his brother's guilty head,

So these to Heaven for retribution cry,
With loud unceasing importunity.

In thought he now toils up some Alpine height,
And thence—upsprings with Desperation's might,
As if to clutch at Heaven : the ground beneath
Breaks, and he sinks where fiends can scarcely breathe.
See how his nerves at spectral horrors start—
While Death—*eternal*—petrifies his heart !

TO THE AURORA BOREALIS,

ON OCCASION OF A LUMINOUS DISPLAY OF THAT PHENOMENON
ONE EVENING IN NOVEMBER, 1837.

Ye midnight Wakers ! that around the pole
In broken circles glance—
That fit incessant—mingling soul with soul
In mystic dance—

Come ye, fair Spirits ! from an Arctic clime—
The ice-caves of the North ?
Come ye from Valhall, where, enthroned sublime,
ODIN shines forth ?

Ye seem the Spirits of the Heroic Dead,
Whose deeds of arms once rung
Through Scandinavia, when her foemen bled—
By Scalds oft sung.

King Hacon!—Hervor!—Harold! great in arms—
 Your shades I recognise
 By their fierce brightness—flashing mock-alarms
 Along the skies.

War your delight on Earth, ye now delight,
 At Harpa Georgii's strains,
 In sportive mood, to swell the phantom-fight
 On Heaven's blue plains.

The fair Moon lingers on her way, to view
 Your revelry and mirth;
 And the blue Stars their melodies renew,
 As at their birth.

But no—my thoughts must change; these thoughts
 To ages passed away, [belong
 When men believed in Asgard's* godlike Throng,
 And Vola's† lay.

And, ye bright Beings! while my charmèd eyes
 Your varying colours view,
 Deep in my Soul more fitting visions rise—
 Of lovelier hue.

Ye seem to me, Ethereal Shades! ye seem
 The Spirits of the Bless'd,
 Who now enjoy, for life's short troubled dream,
 Bliss unexpress'd.

Yes—I can see, 'midst yonder changing blaze
 Of Heaven-created light,

* Asgard—the Hall of the Northern heathen Deities.
 † Vola—an ancient Prophetess of Scandinavia.

Priests and Apostles, who in former days
Fought the good fight.

Ye Prophets, and ye Holy Men of old !
I see your sacred forms—
Bright as when Iris mounts her Arch of Gold
In darkling storms.

And ye brave Thousands ! clad in furbished steel—
Who, in the Holy Land,
Bled for the Cross, though in misguided zeal,
Ye, glittering, stand.

But, bright as meteors burn, ye Martyrs shine,
Who, for Religion's sake,
In patience on the rack were wont to pine,
Or at the stake.

Ye come from Heaven, benignant Souls ! to make
The hopeless less forlorn,
And, in mid-winter, on the Earth to wake
The Boreal morn.

AN OLD VOYAGER'S ADDRESS

TO THE OCEAN-WAVE.

I.

CHILD of the Deep ! gay, sportive child !
Thy nature 's thoughtless, restless, wild—
And none more freedom hath ;

Yet, like the truly great in mind,
 'Tis not a passing breath of wind
 That wakes thee into wrath ;
 But—when dark tempests 'round thee form,
 Thy greatness riseth with the storm,
 And ruin marks thy path.

II.

'Tis pleasant, tow'rs the fall of E'en,
 To view the wide Sea's face serene,
 With laughing sun-beams bright ;
 But when the wave, chafed into ire,
 Shoots high, charged with electric fire,
 'Tis exquisite delight.
 Like giant slumbering, first it heaves—
 Like giant roused, at length it cleaves
 Whate'er it chance to smite.

III.

Who loves not the bright, foaming wave ?
 Who, privileged to choose his grave,
 Would not select the Deep ?
 Methinks an earthy, noisome tomb,
 A narrow cell and endless gloom,
 Might make a corpse to weep.
 Let others dismal church-yards crowd—
 A wave shall be *my* glittering shroud
 In Death's long, dreary sleep.

IV.

For I have lived a stormy life—
 Met every element in strife,
 And cannot think of rest ;
 But fain would join, ev'n when I die,
 The revelry of Sea and Sky—
 King Neptune's constant guest.

Then, all ye wrathful Tempests ! blow—
Let maddening foam collect like snow
On Ocean's towering crest—
'Tis *life*—and *LASTING LIFE* my spirit craves—
Life—Action—Freedom—like the roaring waves.

THE SKY-LARK'S SALUTATION TO APRIL.

APRIL ! thou sweetest Nurse of Spring,
Accept a warbler's greeting :
To thee my first song I will sing,
Nor shyly wait entreating ;
Thy breath expands my little wing—
My breast with joy is beating.

With thee comes many a fragrant breeze,
To gladden earth and ocean—
To fill the fields and forest-trees
With light, and life, and motion—
And prompt each thing that hears or sees
To breathings of devotion.

Too keenly Winter's thousand woes
Were felt on either hand—
Too widely cold Septentrion's snows
Spread Chaos o'er the land ;
But kindlier now Creation grows,
For APRIL waves her wand.

Now fleecy cloudlets—sunny showers,
And skies of warmer hue,

Draw from the earth her choicest flowers
 To sip the pearly dew;
 And sun-beams dance in rural bowers,
 Where humble songsters woo.

The Crow, the Jay, the Cushat-dove,
 Build on the branching tree;
 In grot and grove there's happy love,
 But what is that to me?
 My mate and I soar far above—
 Or nestle on the lea.

Aye be it mine, on April morn,
 To catch the first pure ray
 That, through the orient Ether borne,
 Shoots from the eye of Day.
 Let linnets *lilt* on lowly thorn—
 Give me th' serial lay,
 And one soft spot among the corn,
 When April yields to May.

N E W - Y E A R ' S M O R N.

A DREAM, AND REFLECTION.

I.

ON New Year's morn ('twas in a troubled dream),
 I drifted down a torrent's roaring stream;
 Along fierce rapids, over foaming falls,
 My slight skiff shot, at frequent intervals;
 And thousands with me—men of every clime—
 Flew reckless on through mist and drenching spray,

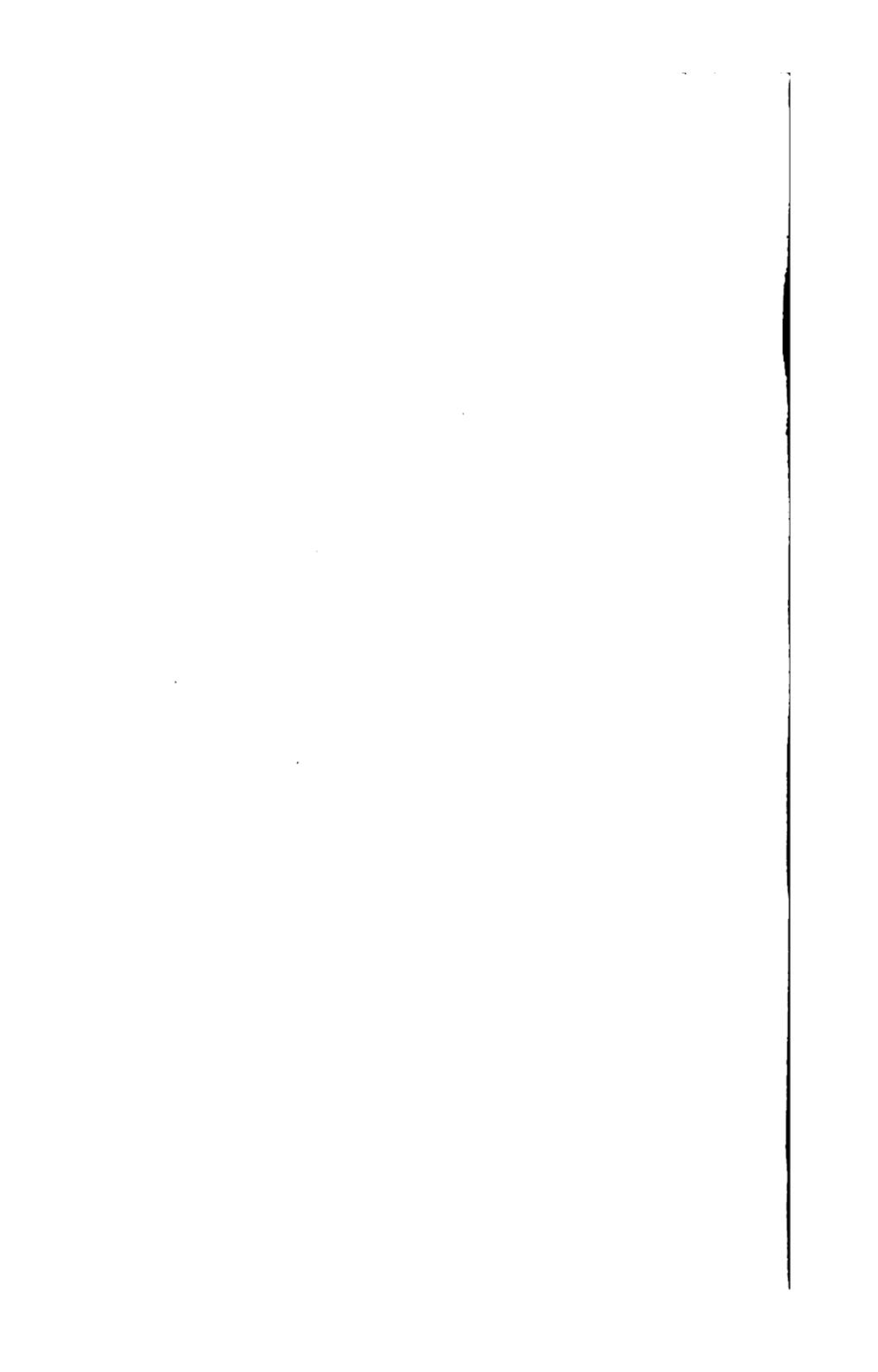
Forgetful that they sailed the torrent Time—
Forgetful of the rocks and whirlpools on their way.

II.

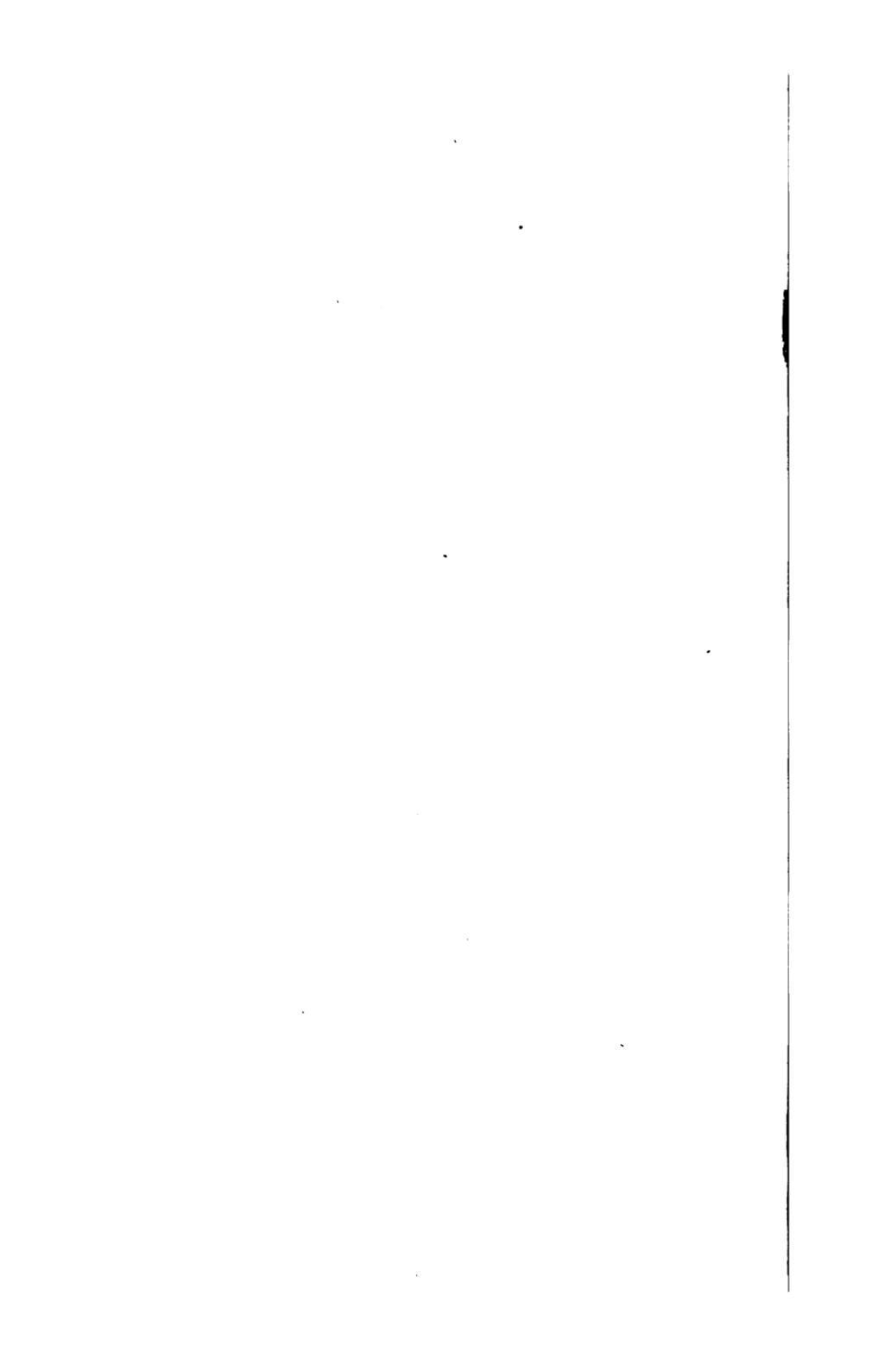
And many every hour were swamped and lost
Within the very pools myself had crossed ;
And every week and month, some hundreds more
Wheeled lifeless in the gulfs, or strewed the shore.
A fearful cataract closed the fatal year,
Where thousands sank ; and those of happier lot
Greeted the waters with a boisterous cheer,
That woke me—and awake, I thus pursued my thought.

III.

This is the season thoughtless men devote
To riot and revelry, and dreaming float
Into another year—perhaps to wake
Amid the *wreck of DEATH*. Oh, sad mistake !—
With frantic mirth thus to salute the tide,
That yearly swells in Time's terrific sea,
And, swelling, hurls its myriads far and wide
Into the vast abyss of dark Eternity !



APPENDIX.



A P P E N D I X.

NOTES TO THE HOLOCAUST.

B O O K I.

1.

*That light she fosters—urging with her breath
The Suttee's blaze—the hot remorseless fire.*

Stanza iii.

My readers are aware, that throughout many parts of the East, and more especially in Hindostan, the miserable widow is burned alive with the remains of her deceased husband. The origin of this horrible practice is uncertain, but religious motives are assigned as the pretext. Some have conjectured, that, as in these and in all unenlightened countries, wives are treated by their husbands rather as slaves than as equals, and often with tyrannical cruelty, this barbarous custom was deemed necessary to secure the husband against poison, or other insidious attempts upon his life. Whatever be in this, the Suttee is even to the present hour a too frequent spectacle in Hindostan, although efforts are being made by the British Government to put a final stop to it. This, and the voluntary sacrifices at the great annual procession of Juggernaut (when the priests drag the immense car), are perhaps the only *systematical* forms in which superstition continues to the present day to be chargeable with actual homicide. But in many parts of the world it still gratifies its naturally savage dispositions, by exacting voluntary penance and tormenting its victims with incessant visionary apprehensions.

2.

*Shew me the coast where man hath never felt
The withering influence of her evil eye!*

Stanza vii.

The tendency of any principle of human action can be learned with infallible certainty only from its ultimate developments in those circumstances in which it is permitted to operate with unrestrained force. Superstition, tried by this simple test, appears in its true colours; for as every country under heaven has, at one time or other, been positively overrun by this plague, so it would appear that there is no race or nation of whom we have any record who have not, in the earlier ages of their history, stained the altars of their imaginary deities with human gore. The spirit of superstition has always had a *tendency* to this practice, and always *must have*; otherwise the practice would not have been *universal*.

3.

*See, in the depths of yon Sarmatian wood,
Where every tree is stained with human gore,
And therefore reverenced!*

Stanza x.

A writer on human sacrifices states, that "Adam Bremensis, speaking of the awful grove at Upsal, where these horrid rites were celebrated, says, that there was not a single tree but what was reverenced as if it were gifted with some portion of divinity; and all this because they were stained with gore, and foul with human putrefaction. The same is observed by Scheiffer in his account of this place."

I may here observe, that the particular *form* of human sacrifice described in this and the two subsequent stanzas, is not fiction but history; though perhaps peculiar to the Celts, rather than the Sarmatians. The priests formed their judgment of future events not only from the agonies and convulsions of the human victim, but likewise from the effusion of blood and other circumstances.

4.

Laughing to see their fellow-men expire!

Stanza xiv.

Dithmar of Mersburgh speaks of a place called Ledur in

Zealand, where there were every year ninety-nine persons sacrificed to the god Swantowite. During these bloody feasts a general joy prevailed, and banquets were most royally served. They fed, caroused, and gave loose to a measure of indulgence which at other times was not permitted. When all was ended, they washed the image of the deity in a pool; and after the assembly was dismissed, their servants, who were numerous, and who attended during the term of their feasting, and partook of the banquet, were smothered in the same pool, or otherwise made away with.—*Encycl. Brit.*

5.

*And cast them down into the fiery maw
Of that insatiable Deity.*

Stanza xvi.

This was a custom which prevailed to a very great extent in Phenicia, a country on the coast of the Mediterranean, of which Tyre and Sidon were the chief towns. The children were generally selected for this cruel purpose out of the most noble and reputable families. The brazen idol stood in the midst of a large fire, and was red with heat. Its arms were stretched out with the hands turned upwards, and thus sloping downwards into the fire; so that the miserable and helpless victims dropped immediately into a glowing furnace. An *only* child was the more liable to be put to death in this manner, being esteemed more precious in the sight of its parents, and therefore more acceptable to the deity, and more efficacious for the general good, because *a greater sacrifice*.—*Encycl. Brit.*

6.

*The sons of merchant-princes, who have sworn,
That, to arrest that Conqueror of the Earth,
Haughty Agathocles, &c.*

Stanza xviii.

Agathocles, although the son of a potter, rose by his superior courage and address to the throne of Sicily. Having been worsted by the Carthaginians at Hymera, he carried the war into their own country, defeated them in several battles, and continued for four years to extend his conquests in Africa.

It was after a great defeat of their army by this skilful general, that the Carthaginians, imputing their repeated miscarriages to the anger of their god Kronos, publicly sacrificed, to appease his fury, three hundred children of the prime nobility.

It is probably a slight deviation from historical accuracy to attribute the slaughter of these children to their own parents *in this particular instance*. But as nothing was more common than for the parents themselves to perform the part of the executioner in such cases, the picture exhibited in the poem is at least a particular delineation of a general truth. Even the tender mother was frequently the daring perpetrator of the cruel deed, and after smothering her own daughter with kisses, she deemed it her duty to shed no tear, and to discover no traces of maternal emotion, as she stabbed her to the heart.

7.

Yea, what was Frankenstein himself but MAN?

Stanza xxxiv.

Many of my readers may perhaps be acquainted with the celebrated novel to which allusion is here made, but may not be aware that the illustrious authoress, Mrs. Shelley, spent part of her early youth in the Carse of Gowrie, and that, in honour of this lady, that neat little crescent of cottages on the margin of the Tay which is now known as Walnut Grove, was originally distinguished by the high-sounding title of "The Hamlet of Frankenstein."

The superstitious man is essentially a self-tormentor, and may well be compared to the hero of this ingenious novel, whose researches into the mystery of animal life are represented as being ultimately crowned with success. He creates a man, or rather a monster in human form, who torments him through life, and ultimately murders his own maker. So is it with the spirit of Superstition: it conjures up imaginary monsters to destroy its own tranquillity. Nay, Frankenstein's monster is a symbol of man himself, regarded as a creature. His natural feelings are those of hostility to his Maker. So long as the passions are powerful, and the propensities wicked, the "carnal mind" cannot fail to be "enmity against God."

8.

To make a Heaven of hell—a hell of heaven.

Stanza xxxiv.

Who, that knows anything of the Greek or Roman mythology, will deny this? The Heathen Deities seemed each to unite in his own character, the divine, the human, and the infernal. Their Heaven was a scene of continual conjugal brawls between Jupiter and Juno, and of inveterate animosities and intrigues among the other gods.

The Greeks and Romans, having such conceptions of Heaven, had too much good sense to transport the souls of the blessed to that celestial region. They sent them to enjoy happiness in the Elysian fields—the situation of which delightful abodes they fixed as far as they possibly could from their imaginary heaven. Elysium was in hell, or at least in the immediate vicinity of that infernal region; and this appears to me to be the only redeeming feature in the classical mythology. It would have been impossible with any degree of comfort to remain half-an-hour in the company of their gods; for in less than that space of time, Mercury would have picked your pockets, and probably Jupiter would have served you as he did his own son Vulcan, whom, in one of his choleric fits, he kicked down to the earth.

9.

To glut the vampyre-mans of the dead.

Stanza xxxvi.

The reader will excuse me for engraving a short note on a purely metaphorical expression, when I state that my object in these notes, as well as in the poem itself, is to exhibit the appalling character of superstition in some of its more prominently revolting features. All men have heard of the Vampyre, but few, I believe, are acquainted with the truly horrible character of that imaginary monster; as, indeed, the Vampyre-superstition was perhaps indigenous to Germany. The following remarks on this subject, which are borrowed from a well-written anonymous work, entitled, *Sketches of Imposture, Deception, and Credulity*, may, on that account, be acceptable to the reader.

“ Among the many superstitions which have terrified and

degraded mankind, that which has received the name of Vampyrism is perhaps the most horrible and loathsome. The Vampyre or Blood-sucker has been forcibly described as a ‘corporeal creature of blood and unquenchable blood-thirst—a ravenous corpse, who rises in body and soul from his grave, for the sole purpose of glutting his sanguinary appetite with the life-blood of those whose blood stagnates in his own veins. He is endowed with an incorruptible frame, to prey on the lives of his kindred and his friends—he re-appears among them from the world of the tomb, not to tell its secrets of joy or woe, not to invite or to warn by the testimony of his experience, but to appal and assassinate those who were dearest to him on earth—and this, not for the gratification of revenge or any *human* feeling, which, however depraved, might find something in common with human nature, but to banquet a monstrous thirst, acquired in the tomb, and which, though he walks in human form and human lineaments, has swallowed up every motive in its brutal ferocity.’

“ It is manifest that a being of this kind must be infinitely more terrible than the common race of ghosts, spectres, and fiendish visitants. But there was another circumstance, which inexpressibly heightened the horror excited by the dread of being attacked. Wasting illness, closed by death, was not all that the victim had to endure. He who was sucked by a Vampyre, was doomed to become in his turn a member of the hideous community, and to inflict on others, even on those who were nearest and dearest to him, the same evils by which he had himself suffered and perished.

“ When a grave was opened in order to search for one of these pests, to put a stop to his career, the sanguinary offender was recognized by the corpse being fresh and well-preserved, the eyes open or half-closed, the face of a vermillion hue, the limbs flexible, the hair and nails long, and the pulse beating.”
Cap. xx.

So much for the horrible character of the Vampyre-superstition. The incident particularly referred to in the poem occurred so late as the Augustan age. It is said of Augustus, that, “ when Perusia surrendered in the time of the second triumvirate, besides multitudes executed in a military manner, he offered up, on the Ides of March, 300 chosen persons,

both of the equestrian and senatorial order, *at an altar dedicated to the manes of his uncle Julius.*

The bold researches of Niebuhr have cast much doubt on the generally received versions of Roman History; but it cannot be denied that human sacrifices were occasionally offered up by that martial and energetic people. A writer on this subject says—"There is reason to think, that all the principal captives who graced the triumphs of the Romans, were, at the close of that cruel pageantry, put to death at the altar of Jupiter Capitolinus." Even Porphyry assures us, that "in his time a man was yearly sacrificed at the shrine of Jupiter Latialis."

10.

*Thus to destroy the practice in the bud,
By shewing that he asked not human blood.*

Stanza xxxix.

I do not mean to deny, that the interesting and memorable event alluded to in this place, was not especially and primarily intended by the Almighty as a trial, or rather, as a manifestation of Abraham's faith. But still I am strongly of opinion, that the view of this subject given in the text (which I submit to the reader with all deference) is likewise substantially correct.

11.

*While Israel's infant-boys and blooming maids,
Headlong were cast into the greedy flame.*

Stanza xl.

The Hebrews were expressly commanded (Levit. xviii, 21) "not to let any of their children pass through the fire to Moloch." But we often read in the history of that people, of idolatrous apostates, who were guilty of this horrible and unnatural practice. There can be no doubt that it corresponded to the practice already described (Note 5), as existing among the Phenicians; from whom indeed, and from the other primitive inhabitants of the country, it was doubtless borrowed. *Tophet* was a place on the east of Jerusalem, and is supposed to have received its name from the beating of drums to drown the cries of the children who were there burned in the fire to Moloch.

NOTES TO THE HOLOCAUST.

BOOK II.

1.

*While in the simple quern
The busy housewife speeds the morning-meal.*

Stanza vi.

The use of the Stone-quern (a very primitive instrument for grinding corn with the hand) is now nearly extinct. It is still, I believe, to be occasionally met with in many parts of Ireland; and I have seen one in Blair-Atholl, which however had become obsolete.

*Forth from the village, with its walls of clay,
And thatched roofs, and pig-stytes evermore—*

For a description of places and circumstances referred to in this, and some of the succeeding stanzas, see the "Preliminary Remarks."

2.

Since the last witch was burned quick with fire—

Stanza xiii.

Burned quick, or, *burned alive*—a common expression in the old writers on *martyrdom* and *witch-burning*. In Sir Thomas Hamilton's minutes of proceedings in the Privy Council, occurs the following entry as quoted by Sir Walter Scott in his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*.

"1608. Dec. 1. The Earl of Mar declared to the Council, that some women were taken in Broughton as witches, and being put to an assize, and convicted, albeit they persevered constant in their denial to the end, yet they were burned quick (alive), after such a cruel manner that some of them died in despair, renouncing and blaspheming God; and others, half-burned, brak out of the fire, and were cast quick in it again, till they were burned to the death."

"This singular document (says Sir Walter) shews that, even in the reign of James VI. so soon as his own august per-

son was removed from Edinburgh, his dutiful Privy Council began to think that they had supt full with horrors, and were satiated with the excess of cruelty, which dashed half-consumed wretches back into the flames, from which they were striving to escape." It appears, however, from many cases besides that of our heroine, that the practice of witch-burning continued a full century longer.

3.

*Shook with the heavy axe, till round and round
The hills reverberated with the sound.*

Stanza xiv.

The report of a musket on the Brae of Monzie, heard by a person stationed at the Kirk, or on "the green," produces a very singular echo, "long drawn out." The sound seems to be making the compass of the hills, as if seeking in vain to effect its escape by some outlet from this natural basin.

4.

*Crieff is astir, and from each street and lane
The sturdy villagers, &c.*

Stanza xvi.

Crieff is the largest *village* in Scotland, the population being upwards of four thousand. Its affairs are managed by a popularly-elected Committee of the inhabitants. As stated in another part of this volume, it is divided from Monzie by the Knock, on the opposite side of which it occupies a gentle acclivity rising from the north bank of the Earn. It is a thriving pleasant town in miniature, and the inhabitants are generally remarkable for more than an average share of Scottish intelligence and probity.

From an eminence on the west side of Crieff the prospect is surpassingly lovely. Wood, water, and picturesque mountains, combine within the limits of one landscape their several attractions. The indenture of the deep basin of Loch Turret is seen to the north-west like a great gulf among the lofty hills; and if the sun be descending in occidental glory beyond the alpine barriers of Lochearn, burnishing successive portions of the river which appear amid the woods like a series of independent lakes, surmounted by the tall white obelisk

on Tom-y-hassel, and shedding a rich mellow tinge on the black deer-forests of Drummond-Castle which extend more to the left, the whole scene partakes rather of the aspect of Fairy-land than of anything belonging to this gross world.

5.

From Comrie too, environed all around

With cloud-capt hills and pinnacles of rock—

Stanza xvii.

The village of Comrie (about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles west from Crieff) possesses—if the expression may be used—no *personal* attractions; but the scenery around it is inimitable. The lofty hills have generally a volcanic appearance strongly imprinted on their bold rugged masses; and who has not heard of Comrie's annual earthquakes? Like comets, they are periodical—tolerably punctual in their visits—dreaded by some, and longed for by others. Mysterious visitors they certainly are, but harmless as children, though their voice, like the voice of two conflicting oceans—of “deep calling unto deep”—heard unnaturally from beneath, is awful and solemn; impressing you irresistibly with the idea, that some agent is at work beneath your very feet, which could lightly make sport of “the everlasting hills.”

The central reservoir of these subterranean noises and convulsions is supposed to be somewhere about a mile to the west of Dunmore Hill, which a stranger may easily distinguish from the surrounding heights by the tall figure of a granite monument, 70 feet high, erected on its elevated summit to the memory of the late Lord Melville—so long, so justly, and so eminently distinguished, as one of the ablest ministers of these realms in troublous and memorable times. The author enjoyed the dreary pleasure of experiencing only one very gentle specimen of these *motus terrae*—a double one, however, the shock being sensibly repeated after somewhere about an interval of half-an-hour. It occurred on a Sunday about 1, P.M. during the time of Divine Service, I think in the month of November, 1843—impressing both minister and flock with no ordinary measure of religious awe, and with a solemn and reverential sense of the audible presence of that Being “who looketh on the earth and it trembleth, who toucheth the hills

and they smoke." An earthquake is a terrible preacher on the subject of omnipotence.

But this shock was trifling, compared with that which occurred on the 23d of October, 1839. The author was at this time residing in France, and therefore he can only speak from hearsay. It occurred about ten o'clock at night, and to increase the terrific sublimity of the occasion, the rain poured in torrents. For some interesting information on this interesting subject, the reader is referred to the *Edin. Phil. Journal* of that period.

It is a singular fact communicated to the author by a gentleman who has long resided in Monzie, and who has now experienced a considerable number of these shocks, that the sound which is a usual concomitant of these formidable visitants, appears to approach underground in the direction of Monzie, passing immediately beneath that village, proceeding eastward in the direction of Logiealmond, and then, as with a deep sudden plunge, descending apparently into some dark unfathomed gulf in the interior of the solid globe.

6.

*From Kenmore and from Aberfeldy some,
With scarce one shoe or bonnet among three—*

Stanza xviii.

This is traditional truth. It is not yet many years since some nonagenarians, who lived and died in Monzie, recorded their testimony to this feature of Celtic barbarism, which they themselves were old enough to remember well. In their younger days the Highlanders came thronging over the hills to Monzie market, which was then held on "the Green;" not a few of them as wild as their own hills, and without either shoe or bonnet.

The two concluding lines of the stanza are equally in accordance with historical truth, and are accurately descriptive of the manners and state of feeling of the Highlanders of this period. Their ideas of the distinction between *meum* and *tuum* were exceedingly vague, and their prejudices were strong in favour of the Pretender, who styled himself "The Chevalier de St. George," but whose head was as completely incompetent as his heart was amiable. Had this man possessed

an average share of energy and intellect, it seems highly probable that his effort in 1715 to regain the throne of his fathers would have been crowned with success.

7.

*For General Wade had not constructed then
Those roads, which like the work of magic seem.*

Stanza xix.

The road which ascends into the Highland fastnesses and recesses of our romantic and beloved country, through that magnificent gateway of Nature's own fashioning, the Small or Narrow Glen, is one of those great northern thoroughfares executed by order of Government, under the superintendance of General Wade, in the year 1725. It diverges from the Perth and Crieff road at Gilmerton, a modern village which disfigures a beautiful locality two miles from Crieff. Issuing from this point it proceeds in a north-easterly direction, scaling by a gradual ascent of about one mile a very considerable acclivity, from the brow of which the traveller, without moving one step from the road, has only to turn round to enjoy a prospect which, once seen, can never be forgotten. Below him is the village and deep hollow of Monzie, with the wood-covered grounds of Monzie House. Beyond this is the tall isolated Knock, standing aloof in its greenness from the surrounding mountains, and heightening by its fresh and woody verdure the contrasted effect of their brown and naked magnificence. On the left of the Knock, seen as through a vista, is the level and variegated flat of Strathearn, smooth as a shaven lawn; and beyond the right of the same hill, far as eye can reach, is a strange and interminable blending of hill, forest, and green vale; at the utmost verge of which, Benvoirloch's transparent and blue peak rises with an effort above the broken and crag-like pinnacles of his brother-mountains.

The next two miles of road are bleak and uninteresting, except to the Southern traveller who has now perhaps visited the Highlands for the first time, and to whom moss and heather are a novelty. The ridge of hills on either hand is of no great elevation, and the vale is so open and upland as to have nothing of the appearance of a glen. But after a brief pilgrimage of two miles, our traveller is suddenly and amply com-

pensated for this temporary disappointment. The scene which now bursts on his view is most striking. It is truly Highland. The features of the landscape are bold, large, and abrupt. They seem to expand into sublime vastness, and then to break asunder into a pleasing variety. The road here diverges by a sudden angle to the left, and he finds himself entering with reverential and subdued feelings the majestic gorge of the Narrow Glen. Immediately behind him is the Fendoch Camp, beyond which the Roman eagle could not penetrate; far below him on the right are the clear waters of the Almond, brawling along down their rocky channel; and the firm smooth road on which he travels, resembling the unfurrowed walks around some baronial residence, strangely contrasts with the rocky and rough grandeur of the surrounding scene, which is nothing else than two immense ramparts of slatey mountain, scantily covered in some places even with moss or heather, and ascending to a vast and gloomy altitude on either side.*

The rebellion of 1715, emanating chiefly from the Highlands, was certainly the means of procuring for that part of the island these admirable roads. They were carried with amazing discrimination through the very heart of those wild and hitherto inaccessible districts, which were known to be the worst affected to the reigning family; and, in a national view, the profound wisdom of that policy which suggested the execution of these elaborate works, has been amply vindicated by the result. There can be no doubt that good turnpike roads have contributed as much as anything else, to smooth down the more rugged features of the Highland character, and to insinuate the gentle influences of civilization, and a taste for the comforts and refinements of cultivated society, into the deep glens and sequestered valleys of our northern Tyrol—inhabited so very lately by a race of half-savage mountaineers. Their mountain-barrier has been broken down—

* A vulgar and somewhat Hibernian distich of the time, expresses the feelings of satisfaction with which, in some quarters at least, these government-roads were regarded—

Had you seen these roads before they were made,
You would hold up your hands and bless General Wade.

their citadel dismantled ; and if the farthest recesses of their romantic region has thus been more easily invaded by unwelcome visitors, in the shape of excisemen and other government officers, they have likewise been invaded by mail-coaches, newspapers, and schools, and by a peaceful host of those inestimable blessings and exalted privileges which nothing but just laws and rational liberty can dispense, and which follow like a great wave the advancing tide of civilization. The Highlands and the Lowlands of Scotland, which previously and even lately were different, and divided from each other by strongly-marked lineaments of national character, have now become happily blended and amalgamated into one prosperous and united community, vying with each other, not in acts of mutual annoyance and depredation, but in the laudable rivalry of commerce, agriculture, and the useful and polite arts.

8.

From Fowlis and Logiealmond—even from Perth—

Stanza xxii.

The Parish of Fowlis is immediately adjacent to that of Monzie, on its eastern side. The district of Logiealmond is part of the parish of Monzie *quoad civita*, but is annexed *quoad sacra* to the parishes of Methven and Moneydie.

9.

That noble bridge which spans the arrowy Tay—

Stanza xxiii.

This useful and solid structure (which is, however, inconveniently narrow), was completed in the year 1771; and on that occasion George Street, now the handsomest street of Perth, was opened. From the *Memorabilia of Perth*, published in 1806, we learn that a bridge of ten spacious arches was carried off by a flood in the year 1621, and that “for the following century and a half, the opposite bank of the river was gained only by ferrying.” Till the opening of George Street in 1771, that miserable thoroughfare, the Skinnergate, “was the only avenue to the Town from the north;” and down to even a later period, the Watergate was the only approach from the south. Gowrie House, the scene of the famous Gowrie Conspiracy, was built by the Countess of

Huntly in 1520, and occupied the site of the present Jail and County Buildings, to make room for which it was removed some thirty or forty years ago.

Allusion is made in next stanza to the South Street and High Street Ports, at neither of which places are the least vestiges of a gateway remaining; but there can be no doubt that, on the west side of the town, these were the two points of issue through the old wall, which must have run along the present site of Methven Street, and which was standing at the period referred to in the narrative. At this time, William Austin was Provost of Perth. In the *Memorabilia*, we are told that "he died on the 4th of August, 1723, greatly respected and lamented; a good man, the friend of the poor, an encourager of industry, a promoter of trade and the linen manufactures. His father, Thomas Austin, came from England with Cromwell's army, and settled at Perth. After the Restoration, he was the father of trade and navigation at this place." In September, 1715, the Earl of Mar, with the rebel army, took possession of the town, and appointed Magistrates friendly to their own cause.

The author may be excused for inserting these brief notices in connection with the history of his native place.

10.

For tea was then a beverage wondrous rare.

Stanza xxiv.

Tea was introduced into Europe in 1610 by the Dutch East India Company. From Holland it was imported into England in 1666, at which time it was sold in London for sixty shillings per pound. In 1715, green tea came into use, the price was lessened, and the practice of drinking tea began to descend to the lower classes. Potatoes came into general use somewhat later, and for a long period were only cultivated in gardens. They were first brought from North America to Ireland in 1565.

11.

A cart surrounded by a martial band.

Stanza xxix.

Witches were generally transported from prison to the stake in this infamous and degrading manner—fastened to a

rude cart, which was guarded on each side by soldiers with drawn swords, or by peasants with pitchforks, and subjected as they passed along to the bitter imprecations, and yet more intolerable merriment and mockery, of the crowd.

“Laithely,” *hideous, disgusting*. Gawin Douglas, in his prologue, thus speaks of the screech-owl;—

Laithely of form, with crukit camscho beik,
Ugsome to here was his wynde elriche shriek.

The few other old words admitted into the poem are these:—
To aby, *to suffer for*; waeworth, *woe betide*; bestrawght, *distraught*; bedeene, *immediately*; Yule, *Christmas*; mirke and gule, *dark and red*, or, *in smoke and flame*.—See *Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry*.

12.

Perhaps she will not burn, though she can swim.

Stanza xxxi.

The reader is perhaps aware, that *the trial by swimming* was one of the most common methods of *proving a witch*. The infamous Matthew Hopkins, who lived about the middle of the 17th century (or 70 years before the date of the events recorded in this poem), and who styled himself “Witch-finder General,” had frequently recourse to this absurd and cruel test. Hopkins was authorized to practise *Witch-finding* as a legal profession: he moved from one place to another, charging twenty shillings from each town (a considerable sum in those times), and excavating many an old woman who might otherwise have gone to the grave unsuspected and unharmed. “His principal mode of discovery,” says Sir Walter Scott, “was to strip the accused persons naked, and thrust pins into various parts of their body, to discover the witch's mark, which was supposed to be (a white spot) inflicted by the devil as a sign of his sovereignty, and at which she was also said to suckle her imps. He also practised, and stoutly defended the trial by swimming, when the suspected person was wrapped in a sheet, having the great toes and thumbs tied together, and so dragged through a pond or river. If she sank, it was received in favour of the accused; but if the body floated (which must have occurred ten times for once, if it was placed with care on the surface of the water), the accused was con-

demned on the principle of King James, who, in treating of this mode of trial, lays down that, as witches have renounced their baptism, so it is just that the element, through which the holy rite is enforced, should reject them; which is a figure of speech, and no argument. It was Hopkins's custom to keep the poor wretches waking, in order to prevent them from having encouragement from the devil, and doubtless to put infirm, terrified, overwatched persons in the next state to absolute madness; and, for the same purpose, they were dragged about by their keepers, till extreme weariness and the pain of blistered feet might form additional inducements to confession."—*Lett. viii.* p. 248.

It is satisfactory to be informed, that "in 1647, Hopkins's tone became lowered," several clergymen and gentlemen "made head against the practices of this cruel oppressor," and at length "the popular indignation was so strongly excited against Hopkins, that some gentlemen seized on him, and put him to his own favourite experiment of swimming, on which, as he happened to float, he stood convicted of witchcraft, and so the country got rid of him. Whether he was drowned outright or not, does not exactly appear."

There were various tests of a witch besides *swimming*. The practice of running pins or needles (often 3 inches in length) into various parts of their bodies, to discover the devil's mark, was commonly resorted to. If these suspected marks or moles did not bleed when thus pricked, or if the accused person did not appear to feel any pain from the operation, the evidence was deemed conclusive. On this subject Sir W. Scott observes—"Besides the fact that the persons of old people especially, sometimes contain spots void of sensibility, there is also room to believe that the professed prickers used a pin, the point, or lower part of which was, on being pressed down, sheathed in the upper which was hollow for the purpose, and that which appeared to enter the body did not pierce it at all."

So much for the trial by pricking. A white spot under the left eye was supposed to be a never-failing sign of a witch. Bleared and squinting eyes, or a hooked nose, were equally infallible indications. Speaking of these disfigurements, the celebrated chymist and physician, Theophrastus Paracelsus,

affirms, that "Nature marketh none thus unless by abortion, for these are the chiefest signs whereby witches be known, whom the spirit Asiendo hath subdued unto himself."

When witches were carried into Court to receive sentence, they were dragged in backwards by the hair, that they might not bewitch the judges by their looks. The reader will be disposed to agree with me in thinking, that "bleared or squinting eyes," and "a hooked nose," were very unlikely features to bewitch any man possessed of an ordinary taste for female beauty.

I shall conclude this somewhat lengthy note by observing, in reference to the trial by swimming, that if the suspected person happened to sink, and thus escaped the imputation of being a witch, she was probably drowned, or seriously injured and abused; if she floated, she was forthwith burned; so that betwixt the two elements of water and fire, her chance of escaping with impunity was very small indeed.

13.

*She hath confessed already, uttered one
Whose form was clad in robes of sacred black.*

Stanza xxxii.

Mr. Bowie was the clergyman who officiated on this occasion. The first Presbyterian minister of Monzie was Mr. Chalmer, ordained July 15th, 1691. In 1711, he was succeeded by Mr. Bowie, who died in 1740. "It affords a curious picture of the manners of the age," says the author of the new Statistical Account of this parish, "to be informed, that the parishioners were in the practice of assembling upon the Green of Monzie on the Sabbath mornings to play at foot-ball; and that, on these occasions, Mr. Chalmer, who experienced great difficulty in inducing his people to attend church, occasionally took part with them in this amusement. By thus gaining their affections, he prevailed on them to accompany him to the house of prayer, and there listen to his instructions."

A friend, residing in Fowlis-Wester, has informed me of a similar circumstance connected with the early Presbyterian history of that neighbouring parish. The Rev. William Hepburn, who was the first occupant of the manse after the Reformation, is said to have instituted a market on Sabbath

for shoes, &c. to entice the people to come to church. Mr. Hepburn was ordained in 1697, and was succeeded, in 1721, by Mr. W. Simpson, in the earlier part of whose incumbency the people of Logiealmond were so heathenish as actually to bleach their clothes on the Sabbath-day. To put a stop to this heinous violation of the Fourth Commandment, Mr. Simpson got his mare roughly shod, and, in a frenzy of religious zeal and indignation, rode over the moor, and, taking the law into his own hand, trampled and tore to pieces the profane linens. Of course, this new *reason annexed to the Fourth Commandment* had the desired effect: the people of Logiealmond, for whose moral and religious suasion the minister's sermons had been altogether ineffectual, were positively trampled into a decent respect for Christian institutions by his mare—a mode of preaching, however, which the present amiable and esteemed pastor of that parish does not find it necessary to adopt.

14.

But truth is best extorted by the rack.

Stanza xxxii.

The most horrible and preposterous element in the judicial procedure of our ancestors, was the almost universal practice of examination by torture. It is impossible to read the sanguinary records of this dark and fearful abomination without blushing for humanity. If evidence failed to convict, or at least to extort a confession, the screw, the rack, and other diabolical inventions of cruelty, were applied so unmercifully and perseveringly as often to wring from the innocent but agonized victim the most absurd confessions, invented, not unfrequently, on the spur of the moment, to escape, albeit by fire and faggot, the horrors of protracted torture, and of a living death. The following extract from the *Amber-Witch* will convey a more accurate and lively idea of this inhuman practice than even the authoritative language of historical detail; for, strange to say, it is often rather to poetry than to history that we must look for *facts*. The historian presents us with the dry and lifeless *record*; but it belongs to the true poet—to the man of vivid and yet faithful imagination—to impress us with the *reality*—to carry us, as it were, to the very scene, and to transform the reader into a spectator. To

appreciate the full force of the following description, it must be recollected that the poor victim is a beautiful, amiable, and truly pious young lady of very tender years, who, on a silly charge of witchcraft, is about to be subjected to the torture, in the presence of her venerable and dearly-beloved father, to extort a confession which she cannot make without uttering falsehoods. "And now," says the father, the supposed author of the narrative, "that hell-hound, the constable, stepped forward, and first showed my poor child the ladder, saying with savage glee, 'See here! first of all, thou wilt be laid on that, and thy hands and feet will be tied. Next, the thumbscrew here will be put upon thee, which straightway will make the blood to spirt out at the tips of thy fingers; thou mayest see that they are red with the blood of old Gussy Biehlke, who was burned last year, and who, like thee, would not confess at first. If thou still wilt not confess, I shall next put these Spanish boots on thee; and should they be too large, I shall just drive in a wedge, so that the calf, which is now at the back of thy leg, will be driven to the front, and the blood will shoot out of thy feet, as when thou squeezest blackberries in a bag.'

"'Again, if thou wilt not yet confess—holla!' shouted he, and kicked open a door behind him, so that the whole vault shook, and my poor child fell upon her knees for fright. Before long, two women brought in a bubbling cauldron, full of boiling pitch and brimstone. This cauldron the hell-hound ordered them to set down on the ground, and drew forth, from under the red cloak he wore, a goose's wing, wherefrom he plucked five or six quills, which he dipped into the boiling brimstone. After he had held them a while in the cauldron, he threw them upon the earth, where they twisted about and spirted the brimstone on all sides. And then he called to my poor child again, 'See! these quills I shall throw upon thy white loins, and the burning brimstone will presently eat into thy flesh down to the very bones, so that thou wilt thereby have a foretaste of the joys which await thee in hell.'

"When he had spoken thus far amid sneers and laughter, I was so overcome with rage that I sprang forth out of the corner where I stood leaning my trembling joints against an old barrel, and cried, 'Oh, thou hellish dog! sayest thou this

of thyself, or have others bidden thee?' Wherenpon, however, the fellow gave me such a blow upon the breast, that I fell backwards against the wall, and *Dom. Consul* called out in great wrath, ' You old fool, if you needs must stay here, at any rate leave the constable in peace; for if not, I will have you thrust out of the chamber forthwith. The constable has said no more than is his duty; and it will thus happen to thy child if she confess not, and if it appear that the foul fiend have given her some charm against the torture.' Hereupon this hell-hound went on to speak to my poor child, without heeding me, save that he laughed in my face: ' Look here! when thou hast thus been well shorn, ho, ho, ho! I shall pull thee up by means of these two rings in the floor and the roof, stretch thy arms above thy head, and bind them fast to the ceiling; whereupon I shall take these two torches and hold them under thy shoulders, till thy skin will presently become like the rind of a smoked ham. Then thy hellish paramour will help thee no longer, and thou wilt confess the truth. And now thou hast seen and heard all that I shall do to thee, *in the name of God and by order of the Magistrates.*' "

When the work of torment was about to begin, the *Dom. Consul*, or the person who acted as supreme magistrate on this occasion, is represented (I believe in strict harmony with actual usage) as rising from his seat and saying, " We hereby make known to the worshipful court, that the question ordinary and extraordinary of the stubborn and blaspheming witch, Mary Schweiidler, is about to begin, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*"

Is not Superstition blasphemy? Mark how the wickedness of the human heart can assume the solemnities of Divine sanction to perpetrate the most horrible atrocities! Extremes meet at all points. They do so in that fearful similitude which is observable betwixt the superstitious barbarities of the Inquisition, and the atheistical butcheries of the French revolutionists.

To the above powerful description, the author appends the following note, explanatory of the concluding words of *Dom. Consul* to the sufferer's father. " It was believed that when witches endured the torture with unusual patience, or even slept during the operation, which, strange to say, frequently

occurred, the devil had gifted them with insensibility to pain by means of an amulet which they concealed in some secret part of their persons."—(*Zeiller's Univ. Lexicon.*)

Thus it happened that, if the miserable and writhing sufferer persevered, with more than human fortitude, in the consciousness of innocence, to refuse uttering a series of falsehoods in the shape of a confession, this desperate and strong proof of her innocence was regarded by these sagacious administrators of Christian law, as only aggravating her guilt. Such is superstition in one of its phases! Such, a brief but vivid picture of the infernal tortures which it inflicted, not on one, nor on one thousand, but on myriads of our fellow-beings!

This harrowing specimen of witch-tortures is, as I have stated, taken from a German work, entitled, *The Amber-Witch, or, The most interesting Trial for Witchcraft ever known, printed from an imperfect manuscript by her father, Abraham Schweidler, the Pastor of Coseron, in the Island of Usedom; edited by W. Meinhold, Doctor of Theology, and Pastor &c.; translated from the German by Lady Duff Gordon.* This work, though fictitious as a whole, both in itself and in the name of its editor, is strictly historical in its details. The object of the author is to exhibit a vividly appalling representation of the unjust and blasphemous proceedings of witch-trials, the absurdity and cruelty of witch-tortures, and the horrors of witch-burning. All these are painted to the life by a master-hand, and with that inimitable simplicity which imparts even to a work of fiction the full force of history. The work is well-meant and well executed; the imaginative embellishments being drawn on a strong groundwork of historical facts. The supposed date of the transaction is about the year 1620, when in Germany, as in other parts of Christendom, and more especially in our own country, the blood-thirsty mania of witch-burning had reached its crisis. One striking feature of those times, finely brought out in this powerful work, is the full and unhesitating belief in the accursed art, which possesses not only the ignorant mob, but the judges and all the actors who are introduced—nay, the very victim herself, who although conscious that *she* is no witch, never once dreams that witchcraft is imaginary. Even Dominus

Syndicus, the learned and amiable lawyer, who is employed by the father of the accused to plead her cause, after discharging his professional duty in a very erudite manner, snatches away his hand which she, in her gratitude, attempts to kiss, and, with a look of infinite horror, breathes upon it thrice, by way of counteracting the supposed witchery of her touch, thereby "shewing that he himself was nowise in earnest with his *defensio*." The only individual who has strength of mind to spurn this general belief, is the young nobleman and student who almost miraculously delivers the young lady at the stake, and to whom she is soon afterwards united in happy wedlock. Even her reverend and pious father, though horrified at the barbarity, injustice, and inconsistency of these judicial proceedings, sees nothing but atheism in the stubborn incredulity of his future son-in-law. The work well merits the perusal of the intelligent and philosophical reader. Though a work of fiction, it is nothing less than an interesting leaf from a dark and gloomy chapter in the history of man.

15.

"Where is the proof?" exclaimed a voice unknown,
And others shouted out—"The proof—the proof?"

Stanza xxxiii.

If such exclamations were not actually uttered by certain more intelligent individuals among the crowd, there can be no doubt that the spirit which they express was beginning at this time to be largely diffused among our population. The time was approaching, and was even now at hand, when so gross an outrage on justice, humanity, and common-sense, as these spectacles exhibited, could no longer be tolerated.

16.

To these plain words who dare denial give—
Thou shalt not suffer any witch to live?

Stanza xxxiv.

There can be no doubt that, under the Old Testament dispensation, witchcraft did really exist among the Jews, and that, by divine decree, *death by fire* was the statute-penalty annexed to the crime; but (as elsewhere explained) when miracles ceased, witchcraft ceased also, and precisely for the

same reason. The Devil was permitted for a period to exercise miraculous power, that the power of Christ “to destroy the works of the Devil,” as well as his power to “overcome the world,” might be made manifest. It *was* made manifest, and, thereafter, it was not necessary that the devil should be permitted miraculously to interfere with the established order of the universe. A fatal misunderstanding of Old Testament principles, which has led to an utter Judaizing of Christianity, has been the pregnant root of many modern errors—even of Popery. Look at the grand heresy of that Church, *justification by works*, and at the splendid mummary of her ritual! What are these but Judaism in disguise?

17.

*Yet here again, I solemnly avow
That witch I am—will that suffice you now?*

Stanza xxxvii.

Many of the miserable and half-crazy wretches who were charged with the crime of witchcraft, were driven, by the horrible privations and tortures which they endured, into absolute madness; under the influence of which, they rejoiced in the distinction of being supposed to hold intercourse with infernal and supernatural beings. Not a few were prompted to do so by constitutional insanity and mental weakness, without the incitement of such tortures: they positively believed in that wretched delusion which they practised on others, and some of these cases are altogether inexplicable. In the preface to the *Amber Witch*, occurs the following striking passage—“Not alone is the demoniacal character, which pervades nearly all these fearful stories (of witchcraft), so deeply marked as to fill the attentive reader with feelings of alternate horror and dismay, but the eternal and unchangeable laws of human feeling and action are often arrested in a manner so violent and unforeseen, that the understanding is entirely baffled. For instance, one of the original trials, which a friend of mine, a lawyer, discovered in our province, contains the account of a mother, who, after she had suffered the torture, and received the holy sacrament, and was on the point of going to the stake, so utterly lost all maternal feeling, that her conscience obliged her to accuse as a witch her only

dearly loved daughter, a girl of fifteen, against whom no one had ever entertained a suspicion, in order, as she said, to save her poor soul. The Court, justly amazed at an event which probably has never since been paralleled, caused the state of the mother's mind to be examined both by clergymen and physicians, whose original testimonies are still appended to the records, and are highly favourable to her soundness of mind. The unfortunate daughter, whose name was Elizabeth Hegel, was actually executed on the strength of her mother's accusation." The author terms this a most interesting psychological phenomenon, and we have every reason to believe, that the fact thus published is as true as the observation upon it is just. In this case the poor woman must have actually believed that both she and her daughter had had intercourse with the Devil: perhaps she had employed the unhappy girl to assist her in some of her infernal though perfectly harmless incantations.

18.

*For even now I see a coming flood,
Which, ere this very year has passed away,
Shall drench the braes of Sherri' Muir with blood.*

Stanza xxxviii.

This prediction we suppose to have been uttered in the spring of the year 1715. Queen Anne had died on the first of August in the preceding year. George I. Elector of Hanover, was then proclaimed King of Great Britain, and the Earl of Mar set up the standard of James VIII. at Perth on the 6th of September, 1715. On Sunday, November 13th of the same year, he engaged in battle with the Duke of Argyle on the Sheriff Muir (which lies within twenty miles of Monzie, on the left hand of the road from Perth to Stirling); but, though greatly superior in point of numerical strength, he had decidedly the worst of the day: the right wing of each army was victorious, but the Duke retained his position on the field, and got possession of the spoils; while the Earl thought proper to retire to his old quarters in Perth. The latter, although esteemed a clever statesman, appears to have been miserably incompetent as a general. Had Claverhouse been alive at this time, it is probable that James, notwith-

standing of his own incapacity, would have been successful in this enterprise. The Earl of Mar's troops were composed in great part of Highlanders, among whom was our friend Rob Roy. He does not appear however to have taken an active part in the battle, as his *principles* led him to act cautiously, till the result of the day should determine his future conduct. In the meantime he seems to have contented himself with quietly appropriating his own share of the plunder; and we find him thereafter writing a letter to General Wade, pleading his inactivity on that day of strife as an evidence of his private leanings in favour of the established government. Sir Walter Scott, after describing this battle in his *Tales of a Grandfather*, concludes with these words—“Thus began and thus ended a confused affray, of which a contemporary ballad-maker truly says, there is nothing certain except that there was actually a battle which he witnessed.” The words of the ballad to which Sir Walter alludes are these—

There's some say that we wan—
 Some say that they wan—
 Some say that nane wan at a', man;
 But ae thing I'm sure,
 That at Sheriffmuir
 A battle there was that I saw, man.

The same ballad takes notice of Rob Roy and his valorous achievements on that day.

Rob Roy, he stood watch
 On a hill, for to catch
 The booty, for aught that I saw, man;
 For he never advanced
 From the place he was stanced,
 Till nae mair was to do there at a', man.

19.

*Yon bonny manse shall ne'er a tenant see,
 Who shall not yet this bitter day abyne.*

Stanza xli.

This, and the other circumstances here mentioned, are said to have been verily predicted by the Witch, when standing on her funeral pile; and so far as the ministers of Monzie

are concerned, the hag's imprecation has been certainly realized in a manner altogether astonishing. I refrain from stating particulars, but I do hope that the present incumbent of that beautiful parish may prove a more fortunate and happy man than the majority of his predecessors; on whom, one after another, the witch's dying curse has so heavily fallen.

It is farther the case, that at this moment the parish of Monzie can boast two remarkable specimens of human beings completely fulfilling the prediction recorded in the closing lines of this stanza.

20.

*And Auchterarder, too, shall ashes see
Ere yet the merry-making day of Yule.*

Stanza xlii.

Auchterarder was burned to the ground by the Earl of Mar in his retreat from Sheriffmuir, to interrupt the expected advance of the Duke of Argyle with the royal army from Stirling. "This severe measure," it is stated, "was the more to be lamented, as it failed in having the expected effect, the royalist troops advancing notwithstanding, and even bivouacking for a night amidst the ruined walls of this very village—the ground being then covered by deep snow."

21.

Yet tears I dare not shed, I cannot pray.

Stanza xliv.

Besides the infallible tokens of a witch mentioned in Note 12, there were these two:—Though subjected to the severest tortures, she could only shed three tears from the left eye; and if requested to repeat the Lord's prayer, or some part of Scripture bearing particularly on the work of redemption, she could never do so without making some important omission, or some egregious blunder. Occasionally, witches were weighed against the Church Bible, and acquitted if the latter kicked the beam, which, one would think, must have generally happened. This was the only recognised ordeal which did give these unfortunate creatures a good chance of escape, and therefore it was seldom resorted to.

22.

Oh, had I here the mystery of my might!

Stanza xliv.

It is said, that, when expiring in the midst of the flames, Kate grievously deplored the loss of some talismanic stone, the possession of which would have enabled her to defy their fury, and to laugh to scorn the hostility of the multitude.

23.

Yea, than the shaking of an earthquake's tread.

Stanza xlviii.

Some have affirmed, that the first Comrie earthquake is not yet fifty years old. I question the authority on which this statement rests; and I am strongly inclined to dispute the fact itself. A near relation of my own recollects of a rather severe shock happening *fully* fifty years ago, which was felt throughout Logiealmond and Methven, in which latter district she then resided; and she says, that at that period the earthquakes of Comrie were spoken of by the people in these quarters as things with which they had long been familiar. Moreover, I think I have read somewhere that one took place cotemporaneously with the great earthquake which overthrew Lisbon in 1755; and why not several previously to that date? The volcanic appearance of the surrounding hills is not of yesterday.

24.

*Oh that they could! my flesh is roasting red,
Till the oil droppeth from each finger point.*

Stanza xlix.

If the reader wishes to form some idea of the awful and harrowing nature of those dismal *bonfires* which our ancestors so often witnessed, let him read the account of the burning of that good man, Bishop Hooper, in Fox's *Book of Martyrs*; and the painfully minute description there given will leave a horrible impression on his mind not easily eradicated. The very fat is described as dropping from the fingers of that hand with which the miserable man continues for more than an hour to beat his naked breast in a paroxysm of unspeakable agony.

25.

*And yet I have a benison to give—
I spit it out, &c.*

Stanza li.

See "Preliminary Remarks."

NOTES TO LAYS OF PALESTINE.

1.

*Child of the stranger! thine are thoughts
Of shadowy hue and powers divine.*

Page 149.

The inhabitants of Eastern countries believe that all Franks are magicians, and that they possess the supernatural power of forcing secret places, and extorting from their dark recesses the riches which lie concealed amid the ruins of their ancient temples and palaces. Hence their extreme jealousy of travellers, and the difficulty of taking notes, or committing anything to paper, without exciting their suspicions.—*Burckhardt, Wilson, &c.*

2.

*Or raised the simoom-blasted sand,
To lave my brow, and cleanse my hand.*

Page 150.

In default of water, the Mussulman performs his ablutions with the sand of the desert. Buckingham mentions an instance of this in the case of his generous Syrian guide, whose faithfulness and noble bearing suggested this poem.

3.

*While from thy flow of raven-hair
Flashed the carbuncle's fitful light.*

Page 151.

In the East, it is not uncommon, with the fair sex at least, to replenish the hair with precious stones. Dr. Clarke, de-

scribing the four Sultanas whom he had the exquisite pleasure of seeing, at the risk of his life, through a gimlet-hole, says—“ Their tresses were quite powdered with diamonds, not displayed according to any studied arrangement, but as if carelessly scattered by handfuls among their flowing locks.”—*Travels*, Part II. § 1, cap. i.

4.

*Or canst thou mark a fiery radience yet,
Where the Sidonian crypts in ruins lie?*

Page 166.

Olivet stands on the east of Jerusalem. Among his remarks on this mountain, Dr. Clarke says—“ We found upon the top the remains of several works, whose history is lost. Among these were certain subterraneous chambers of a different nature from any of the *Cryptæ* we had before seen. One of them had the shape of a cone of immense size, the vertex alone appearing level with the soil, &c. This extraordinary piece of antiquity, which, from its conical form, may be called a subterraneous pyramid, is on the very pinnacle of the mountain. * * * This crypt has not the smallest resemblance to any place of Christian use or worship. Its situation upon the pinnacle of a mountain rather denotes the work of Pagans, whose sacrilegious rites upon the high places are so often alluded to in Jewish history.” *Part II. cap. xvii.*

5.

The sun emerging from Deguisi's strand—

Page 166.

The lake Asphaltites (the Dead Sea) is named by the Arabs Almotanak, also Bahretlout, or sea of Lot; and the Turks call it Ula Deguisi.—*Wilson's Travels*, Vol. I. p. 318.

6.

The vale of buried kings lies far below—

Page 166.

The vale of Jehosaphat, through which flows “ the brook Kedron,” lies between the City of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. Here Jehosaphat was buried, and here the pillar of Absalom is shown. The Jews continue to throng to Jeru-

salem from various parts of the world with the view of reposing in this valley,

When death shall close their weary aching eyes—
and they expect, that in this place all the nations of the earth
shall assemble on the morning of the resurrection.

7.

Go, hire thy mourners as thou didst of old!

Page 166.

In evidence that the Jews anciently did so, Hartwell Horne cites the following passages:—*Jerem.* ix, 17, 18; xvi, 6, 7; xlviii, 36, 37. *Ezek.* xxiv, 16, 17, 18. These mercenary mourners were accomplished mimics: they wept, howled, and lamented almost to distraction, *if well paid*.

8.

*Alas! so visions mock the wanderer's eye,
Where Almotanak heaves his sulph'ry tide.*

Page 167.

Every reader of oriental travels has heard of the *Mirage*, that optical illusion, which tantalizes the thirsty traveller by imparting to the distant sands of the desert the appearance of a vast lake, which dissolves as he approaches. Other illusions are not unfrequent in these arid wastes. Mr. Wilson, describing a tour which he made to the desolate and bituminous shores of the Dead Sea, writes thus—“As I proceeded, my attention was vividly excited by views of regularly-formed castles, fortifications, towers, and other edifices, many of them of the finest architecture I had ever beheld; but, on approaching them, it proved to be an illusion produced by the sun's beams, and vanished as if in an instant.”—*Wilson's Travels*, Vol. I. p. 311. So, alas, vanish many of our youthful dreams!

E R R A T A.

- Page 41, line 4, of Note, for naturalist, read materialist.
„ 42, „ 28, for of security, read of the security.
„ 82, „ 8, of Note, for in the hill, read on the hill.
„ 99, „ 6, of Stan. azzvi, insert and before recherchè.
„ 101, „ 2, „ alii, for built for, read did build.
„ 128, „ 1, delete the dash after high, and insert a comma after
empire.
„ 144, „ 23, for lonely read lovely.
„ 165, „ 4, of Stan. avi, insert the before Kishon's.
„ 260, „ 2, for has, read have.

mu

